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YOUNG CHRISTIAN'S ~~52~~

SUNDAY EVENING:

OR, AN

EASY INTRODUCTION

TO

THE READING OF THE BIBLE.

FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN.

BY

THE AUTHOR

OF "THE INFANT CHRISTIAN'S FIRST CATECHISM."

Oh, say not, dream not, heavenly notes
To childish ears are vain,
That the young mind at random floats,
And cannot reach the strain.

Dim or unheard, the words may fall,
And yet the heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.



LONDON:

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AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1831.

L O N D O N :
G I L B E R T A N D R I V I N G T O N , P R I N T E R S ,
S T . J O H N ' S S Q U A R E .

TO
LADY ROSS,
THE KIND ENCOURAGER OF THE
AUTHOR'S FIRST ATTEMPT TO SMOOTH TO CHILDREN
THE PATH OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION,
ANOTHER LITTLE WORK,
UNDERTAKEN PARTLY AT HER LADYSHIP'S REQUEST,
AND FOR WHICH SHE IS ANXIOUS
TO SECURE THE SAME COUNTENANCE AND
APPROBATION,
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY HER OBLIGED AND AFFECTIONATE,
L. P.

P R E F A C E.

THE object of the following little book, expressed in its title, scarcely needs any further explanation. At the same time, being well aware of the number of productions, already before the public, in some degree of a similar nature, the Author feels it necessary to state her reasons for the present undertaking.

In looking anxiously for an interesting book, which should serve to introduce her own children to the knowledge of Scripture history, in a manner at once attractive and easy, the Author was led to observe, that most of the works published with this view, are written in so abridged a form, as to deprive the sacred story of those numerous charms

with which it is clothed in the Bible itself;—charms, of which children are so far from being insensible, when presented to them in *language* adapted to their years, that (as far at least as the Author's experience has gone) no subject seems to possess for them half that lively interest, which their young minds attach to the simple, the diversified, the picturesque, and affecting narratives which abound in the Word of God. Were there not difficulties to a child in entering at once on the perusal of the Bible, and many points, especially of geography and history, which require development, not to mention practical application, from which it were pity that they should be debarred, the best method probably would be, even from the first, to put the Scriptures themselves, or at least selections from them, into the hands of children. But, these difficulties and necessities considered, this seemed not advisable at the very beginning. In giving, however, the history of the Bible in other words, and with the necessary explanation, it was desirable to retain, as much as possible, in easy narrative, the

varied fulness of that sacred story ; so that the child's first impressions of the Divine volume should be, that it is not only the best, but the most delightful, book in the world. Such is the end at which the Author has *aimed*, though feeling at every step the difficulty of accomplishing such a purpose, and lamenting her inability to do any thing like justice, even to her own thoughts, how much more to the subject itself !

Besides a developed and connected view, in easy language, of the Scripture story itself, the Author has endeavoured to intersperse in the narrative such notices of the countries spoken of, together with such references to the New Testament, and practical remarks, as would tend to make the work either more interesting, more intellectually improving, or more valuable, in a moral and religious light.

The present volume is carried down, as will be seen, to the close of the Pentateuch ; and it is thus presented to mothers, with the view of ascertaining how far the work is likely to answer its end, before any additions are

made to it. Meanwhile, in the hope that she may not have been altogether unsuccessful, the Author trusts, by the Divine blessing, to continue the design: but even should that intention be disappointed, perhaps what has been done, though incomplete in reference to the whole of Scripture history, may yet have its value, as an *introduction* to it, in familiarising the young reader with its commencement, embracing, as that does, a portion, not only of great importance in itself, but peculiarly abounding in interest for children.

It may not be unnecessary to add, in regard to the *age* of those for whose use the following volume was intended, that it may be put into the hands of very young children, even those of five years of age, who can read at all fluently, provided they read it with a parent or teacher. To older children it may perhaps prove both improving and interesting for their own private reading.

The highest satisfaction which the Author proposes to herself, is, that her little work should obtain the approbation of judicious

and pious parents, and prove, by the blessing of God, an assistance to the Christian mother, in giving to her children an early knowledge and love of His sacred word.

Clare Hall, Antigua,

Oct. 22, 1830.

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THE
YOUNG CHRISTIAN'S
SUNDAY EVENING.

INTRODUCTION.

EDWARD. Is to-day Sunday, mamma?

MAMMA. Yes, my love, it is.

E. Oh! how glad I am, that happy Sunday is come again! it is very often Sunday.

M. Yes: you know how often? One day in each week is Sunday, and there are not many days, are there?

E. No, only seven; and one of these days belongs to Almighty God: I like Sunday best.

M. I am glad you do, Edward; for it is the best day in all the seven. But can you tell me why you like Sunday so much?

E. Yes, I can; for, when Sunday comes, I am so happy, I know that I must be sure to get up in a good humour, and when I wake, I think of it, and try to be good. Then, though I am not to have my play-things, nor to make a noise, which I forget sometimes, yet I like Sunday best. For my Sunday books are so pretty, and I am very fond of my Sunday-maps; and then, mamma, there is the best

treat of all, I go to Church with you. May I go with you to-day?

M. I do not think I can take you to-day ; at least, not unless you are sure that you will be quite good, and not get up and down so often ; for I cannot pray to God myself, if I have to look at my little boy, and to keep him quiet.

E. Indeed, mamma, if you will try me to-day, I will be quite quiet ; I will kneel by you when you kneel, and sit by you when you sit down.—Do try me once more, dear mamma.

M. Well, Edward, if you wish it so very much, I will take you to-day ; and I hope that from this time you will always be quiet at church, and not forget in whose house you are.

E. Church is God's house, mamma.

M. Yes, my love, it is ; and when we go there, we must not forget, that the great God is there, and that, though we cannot see him, yet he sees and hears us. A church is called the house of God, because it is the place where all those, who do not forget God, go every Sunday to pray to God, and to praise him ; and to hear part of his Holy Word read and explained. My little boy knows, that to pray to God, is to ask of God any thing we feel we want ; and as we are not able to help ourselves, nor to take care of ourselves, and as we should never be able to be happy if God did not bless us, we have very great need indeed to pray to God. And then, as we are every day doing things that we ought not to do, and forgetting to do what we ought to do ; and as, if we try ever so much, we cannot grow good without God's help, we have very great need indeed to ask

God to forgive us, and to send his Holy Spirit into our hearts to make us good.

E. And, mamma, we must thank God for all his kindness to us.

M. Yes, my dear child ; we have much to praise God for besides. It is God who has given us all our blessings and comforts, our kind friends, our sweet homes, our food, our clothes, our beautiful fields and flowers, and every thing that makes us happy. Now here are a great many reasons at once, Edward, for going to the house of God : but I must tell you one more. At church, besides praying to God and blessing him, we hear his Word read and explained ; that is, the Holy Bible, which tells us so much about God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and heaven. I need not tell you now, Edward, what I mean when I speak of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and heaven ; nor why we are to love God's Word, and keep his Sundays holy, because you have learnt all this in that little book of Catechisms, which was written to explain these things to very little children, and which is called "The Infant Christian's First Catechism."

E. O yes, mamma, I have learnt it all ; I am come quite to the end of the book ; there is no more for me to learn.

M. There is no more in that little book, but there is a great deal for you to learn still, my boy. You know very little yet of all the beautiful stories that are written in the Bible ; you are not quite old enough to read the Bible itself, because the words are not very easy ; but still, do you not think it would be very pleasant, if I were to talk to you on Sunday evenings,

and to tell you, in words that you can quite understand, some of the beautiful stories which are written in the Scriptures? Do you not think, if we had something of this kind to do, our Sunday evenings would be spent very happily?

E. Oh! that they would mamma! Will you begin to-night? this very evening? Oh! how I wish it were come!

M. I mean to begin to-night, my love; if you behave well at church, and are good and kind, and obedient all day.

E. Oh! I will try so hard to be good! And will God Almighty help me, mamma?

M. Yes; God Almighty will be sure to help a little child, whom he sees trying to please him. He will send his Holy Spirit into that little child's heart, to make him good. Now, my love, go up stairs, and stay there till it is time to go to church.

E. Kiss me, dear mamma, before I go!

FIRST SUNDAY EVENING.

ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

AND now I must tell my young readers, that the little boy, who was talking to his mamma in the morning, was about five years old ; he could read very nicely, and was upon the whole a good child : that is, he took great pains to be good, and, when he felt naughty, he used to try to get good again. He knew that God saw all that he did, and he was afraid of making God angry with him. He loved his papa and mamma, and tried to please them, by obeying them in all things, and he was always very sorry when he had been naughty ; for then his dear mamma looked grave at him, and he did not like to see her look grave ; he loved to see her smile, and to hear her say he was good. Now little Edward had often looked at the pictures in the Family Bible, and in some of those pretty books which his mamma gave out to him every Sunday morning, and thought how much he should like to know what they were all about. For though many of these little books had reading in them, giving some account of the pictures, yet the words were not plain and easy enough for so young a child as Edward to understand. He was, therefore, quite pleased when his

mamma said that she would talk to him every Sunday evening, and tell him some of the beautiful stories that are to be found in the Bible. Edward had always thought Sunday a very happy day, but now he loved it better than ever. He could hardly wait for the evening, and as soon as it was come, and candles were brought into the room, little Edward got his chair, and looked at his mamma, very often, to see if she were ready too. At last she came and sat down by him, and began to teach him. And now you shall hear all that little Edward was taught by his mamma.

E. Mamma, said Edward, what are you going to tell me about to-night?

M. I shall talk to you, this evening, about Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Adam was the first man, and Eve the first woman, that God made.

B.C. He placed them in a beautiful garden, which
4004. was called the garden of Eden, or Paradise. This garden of Eden was in that quarter of the world called Asia. It was full of trees, and flowers, and fruits ; it was full of happy creatures of every kind.

E. Oh ! mamma, how happy Adam and Eve must have been in that sweet place, with flowers to take care of, and so many birds and animals to amuse them ! Were they not very happy ?

M. Yes, my love ; God made them quite good, and quite happy ; He made them like himself. No quarrelling was heard in that blessed place ; even all the animals loved one another. The wolf and the lamb used, then, to feed together ; and the lion, and the leopard, and the tiger, and all those animals

that are now so fierce and angry, in Paradise would lie down with the little kid. But you know they cannot do so now ; the gentle lambs and kids are quite afraid of the lions and the wolves.

Now Edward, who was very fond of lambs and kids, was sorry to hear this ; and he asked his mamma what had made this sad change.

M. Sin, my dear child ! Sin came and spoilt every thing. You know that we sin, whenever we do any thing that God does not like ; whenever we do what he tells us not to do. You will think it very strange, that sin should find its way into that pleasant place, where all was so good and so happy. But it did get in ; and I will tell you how. There was one tree in the garden of Eden, which God told Adam and Eve they were not to touch. There were a great many other trees full of fruit, which God gave them leave to eat of, and only one which they were not to touch. God said, that if they did eat of that tree, they should surely die. God wished to try Adam and Eve, if they would obey him ; and so he told them not to touch this tree, which was called the Tree of Knowledge. Now, there was a wicked spirit, called the Devil, who did not like to see Adam and Eve so happy. He had been happy himself once ; even one of the angels in heaven ; but he was proud, and would not obey God ; therefore God drove him out of Heaven ; for, if he had staid there, he would have spoilt that happy place. Now this wicked spirit, whom God had punished very much, and who was unhappy himself, did not like to see our first parents so happy ; and he thought he would try to make them wicked also. So he

took the shape of a serpent, and went into the garden of Eden, and found Eve alone: and he told her that, to eat the fruit of that tree would make them wise, and that they should not surely die for eating it as God had said. Then Eve minded him more than God, and she took of the fruit of the tree which God told her not to take, and gave some to Adam too; and they both ate of it. Thus sin got into that world, which God had made so good.

E. Did God see what they did, mamma?

M. Oh, yes, he sees every thing. They tried to hide themselves from him amidst the thick shade of the trees; for they were afraid to see God, knowing that they deserved his anger; and they were ashamed to shew themselves to him. But God's searching eye found them out. Adam and Eve forgot that they could not hide from God. You see here what a sad thing sin is! When they were good, they used to love to hear God's voice, and they used to go out to meet him.

E. Mamma, good people are not afraid of God?

M. No: but the wicked are; because God's anger is very terrible, and the Bible says that he is angry with the wicked every day. God was very angry with Adam and Eve, and sent one of his mighty angels to drive them out of Paradise: and they came into this world where we live.

When Edward heard that Adam and Eve were obliged to leave Paradise, he looked very grave, and was almost ready to cry: and he said to his mamma, Poor Adam and Eve! were they not very sorry to leave that happy garden?

M. Yes; they were very sorry to leave that garden

where they had been so happy in the love, and favour, and presence of God ; and I dare say they were rather sorry to leave those trees and flowers which they loved so well, and which would never grow again as they did in Paradise. But God was very good. He forgave them what they had done, and promised to send them a blessed Saviour, who should die to get for them a better Paradise than Eden.

E. Oh, mamma ! is there any better Paradise ?

M. Yes, my love ; that better Paradise is Heaven. And our blessed Saviour did come, as you know, and die for the sins of the whole world ;—for Adam and Eve, and for us too :—only let us take care that we are very sorry for our sins ; that we love our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we try to please God ; then, when we leave this world, we shall be quite sure to find that our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ has kept places for us in that better Paradise above.

E. Mamma, God said, that if Adam and Eve took the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they should surely die. Did they die ?

M. Yes, my love, they did die ; though not at the moment that they disobeyed God, for he was kind enough to give them time to become better. But many years after they died, and their bodies were laid in the ground, and turned again to dust, out of which they were made at first ; and all the men and women that have lived ever since have died ; and all that are now alive must die ; for *death* is the punishment of *sin*. Now, I hope my little boy will learn from the story he has just heard, to hate sin. It was sin that obliged our first parents to leave

the garden of Eden; it was sin that brought our Saviour down from heaven, to die upon the painful cross: therefore God hates it, and the holy angels hate it; and those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and remember what he suffered for sin, will hate it too. But I have finished my account of Adam and Eve, and I see that Edward has been listening to all that I have said. Now, my dear little boy, good night. Next Sunday, I hope I shall be able to talk to you again. Then Edward kissed his dear mamma, said his prayers, and went up to bed, and all the time he was undressing, he thought of Adam and Eve, and of all that his mamma had told him about them.

SECOND SUNDAY EVENING.

CAIN AND ABEL.

EDWARD was very glad when Sunday evening came again: and whilst his mamma was reading, he looked at a picture he had found of Adam and Eve, and thought of all he had heard about them. When his mamma came to him, she asked him a great many questions about what she had told him; and he was able to answer them all. His mamma was pleased to see how attentive he had been, and she said; I am going to tell you, to-night, the story of Cain and Abel.

M. There were two sons of Adam and Eve; but before I say any more about them, I must tell you that, when Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden, they found every thing very different from

what it had been there. In Paradise, every thing that was beautiful to look at, or good for food, grew out of the ground without any help from man. But now it was not so. Thorns and thistles grew instead of fruits and flowers; for the earth belongs to God; and is obliged to obey his will: and when Adam and Eve had sinned, God said that, for the time to come, they should be obliged to work very hard, with much labour and sorrow, before the ground should give them any thing useful or good. And it was so;—they were obliged to dig, and sow, and plant, before they could get any bread to eat. Now, Cain worked in this way; and he was called a tiller of the ground; but Abel took care of sheep and lambs, and he was called a shepherd. These two brothers were not at all like one another. Cain was a wicked man. He did not love God, nor obey him, nor take any care to please him. I will tell you how he first shewed his disobedience to God. God had desired Adam and Eve, and all their children, to offer up sacrifices to him of the best things that they had; the best of their lambs or of their flock.

E. What is a sacrifice, mamma?

M. A sacrifice is something offered up to the great God who gives us all. God told them to offer up sacrifices to him, that they might have some way of showing that they remembered God, and feared him, and wished to please him. But this was not all. By telling them to kill their innocent lambs, and offer them up to the Lord, God meant to teach men that they deserved to die themselves. Nor yet was this all. You know, when Adam and Eve left Paradise, God promised that he would one day send them a blessed

Saviour, who should die to save them from the anger of God. Now these sacrifices were to teach them to look on to the time when the Lamb of God should die for the sins of the world. You know whom I mean by the Lamb of God ?

M. Yes, mamma ; you mean, our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins. I see now, mamma, why the blood of little lambs was to be shed : it was to teach all people to believe in Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed for sin.

M. I am glad I have been able to make you understand me, Edward ; and now I must tell you, that Cain did not obey this command of God. He did not like to give the best things that he had to God : so he offered up some of the fruits of the ground, instead of a lamb from his flock ; and God was angry with Cain, and would not have his offering.

E. Was Abel a good man ? Did he mind God ?

M Oh ! yes ; Abel loved God, and knew that God had given him all that he had ; and I dare say he was glad to be able to give something of his own back to God, and that he could so easily shew his love to him. Therefore he took one of the best of his lambs, and offered it up to the Lord : and God was pleased with Abel and his offering. Now we often see that wicked people do not love those who are good ; because their goodness makes wickedness look so ugly. Thus it was with Cain. He did not love Abel, his brother, because God loved him, and was pleased with him and his offering ; and he wished he had no good brother. At last, one day, when they were out in the fields together, Cain rose up and killed him.

Yes, my love, you may well look shocked; he did indeed kill his own brother Abel! Another sad proof that sin had got into that world which God made so good.

E. Mamma, did God Almighty see what Cain did?

M. Yes, as I told you before, God sees every thing. There is nothing done in all the world, which is hid from him. God knows every angry thought; he hears every unkind word; he sees every wicked action. When Cain had killed his brother, he thought, perhaps, no one would know it: but God called to him out of heaven, and said "Where is Abel thy brother?"

E. Did God punish Cain?

M. Yes; he punished him very much; for he drove him away from his home; from his father and mother and friends, and made him a wanderer in the world, cast off from the favour and presence of God; and this was as great a punishment as any he could have had.

Now, my dear boy, we must stop for to-night; but I hope you will think much of this sad story. Remember we must all learn from it, not to be angry or quarrelsome, but to love one another. We must pray to God, to give us gentle tempers, and to fill our hearts with love and kindness.

THIRD SUNDAY EVENING.

THE FLOOD.

THE next story that Edward and his mamma came to, was about the world being drowned, and he asked what that meant.

M. You will soon understand, my love, if you listen to what I am going to tell you. Not very long after Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden, the world grew very wicked. Still there were here and there some good men, and one of these was Enoch. He was a holy man, and pleased God so much, that he would not let him stay long in so bad a world; neither would God let Enoch know any thing of the pains of death, but took him up at once into heaven without dying. Happy Enoch! What a blessed change it must have been to him! to be taken from a world so full of sin to heaven! that holy world where God lives, and where sin can never come! After holy Enoch went to heaven, the people grew more and more wicked every day; "and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every thought of his heart was only evil continually, and it grieved the Lord, that he had made man!" The Bible tells us of only one good man at this time, amongst all the people that were in the world. This good man was Noah: "He found favour in the sight of the Lord;" that is, God was pleased with Noah, and loved him, and took care of him, when the rest of the world perished. For, at last, God would bear no longer with the wicked people, and he told Noah that he would destroy the whole world with a flood of waters; that is, he would send such a dreadful rain as should fill all the earth, and destroy every thing that was in it. God told Noah what he was going to do a great while before, because he meant to take care of Noah, when the rest of the world were punished. For God desired Noah to build

himself a great ark, which was a kind of house or vessel, that would float upon the waters. This ark was large enough to hold Noah and his wife, and his children, and a very great number of living things besides ; for God told Noah, that he was to take into the ark with him two of every kind of animal, and two of every kind of bird, and of all sorts of creeping things ; and he was also to take plenty of food, both for them, and for himself and his family.

... *E.* What a long time Noah must have been building this ark, mamma ! Why did not God make an ark for Noah ? You know God could have made one directly ; for he made the world and every thing in it.

... *M.* There is no doubt, my love, that God could have made an ark for Noah ; but God wished to try Noah's faith and obedience. By trying Noah's *faith*, I mean, that God wanted to prove, whether Noah believed what he said to him, and whether he could trust in God to take care of him exactly in the way that he chose. Faith in God, means to believe whatever God says to us, and to trust in his care and mercy for all things. By trying Noah's *obedience*, I mean that God wanted to prove whether Noah would do as God commanded him. And perhaps there was another reason for desiring Noah to build an ark, and such an ark as would take a long time to make, which was, that God wished to give the people plenty of time to repent. For the Bible says, that God "willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance !" And again "that he is slow to be angry, and ready to forgive."

E.: Mamma, did Noah really believe in God, and do as he told him?

M. Yes; Noah shewed that he really was a good man, and had a great deal of faith in God, for though the flood, which God had told him of, did not come upon the world for a very long time, yet Noah went on, day after day, building his ark; believing that the flood would come, because God had said so. At length the ark was finished, and the time came when God would wait no longer to try if men would leave off their wickedness, and become good. All the while Noah was building the ark, these wicked people had time to repent, that is, to be sorry for their sins, and to begin to serve God. They saw Noah building his ark, and he had told them, you may be sure, what he was doing, and why he was doing it; and begged them over and over again to leave off their wickedness, and to serve the Lord. There is no doubt of this, because Noah is called in the Bible a "Preacher of Righteousness;" which means, that he preached to the people, and tried to teach them what was right. But all would not do; and at last the ark was finished, and God called to Noah and said: "Come, thou and all thy house, into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me." By calling Noah righteous, God meant that he was a holy and good man. A holy man is a person who keeps himself from all sin, and gives himself up to serve and please God. Now Noah had shewn himself to be a holy man; for when all the rest of the world were walking in their own wicked ways, trying only how to please themselves, "Noah walked with God." He kept God always in

his thoughts, and tried very hard to please him: this was the reason why God said, "Thee have I seen righteous before me; come thou and all thy house into the ark." And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him; and he went into the ark with his wife, his three sons, and his sons' wives; eight persons altogether, and the Lord shut them in. And when they had been in seven days, the windows of heaven were opened, so that the rain came down in exceeding great quantities; and the waves of the great sea, which obey God's voice, and cannot go further than he permits them, those mighty waves were let loose, and rolled over the earth. Then was the whole of that pleasant earth covered with water. Think how dreadful it must have been! All the trees, and flowers, and fruits, all the houses also were swept away; the waters were exceeding great; so great, that all the tall mountains and high hills, under the whole heaven were covered, and all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and cattle, and beast, and of every creeping thing; and every man, woman, and child, all who had the breath of life in them died.

E. Did this happen a very long time ago, mamma?

M. Yes, Edward; this sad event happened more than four thousand years ago; but that should not make us think less about it, than if it had happened only a few years ago.

E. Mamma, I wonder the ark was not drowned too!

M. No, Edward; those waters, so dreadful to the wicked, only bore up the ark in which Noah was, and lifted it above the waters, and kept it safe from

danger. God would not let the waters cover the ark. Thus Noah only remained alive, and those that were with him in the ark ! See here, my dear boy, how able God is to take care of those who serve him. Think of that little family, riding safely on those mighty waters, fearing no evil, for God was with them ! See the happiness of serving God ; and whilst you try, as I hope you will all your life long, to please him, learn from this story, which was written in the Bible for our good, to trust in God to take care of you. Learn, again, my child to hate sin. Think how God must hate it, when it caused him to destroy that beautiful world which he had such pleasure in making, and all those people whom he had made to be good and happy here, and to live with him for ever afterwards in heaven. But we have been talking a long time to-night ; I think you must be tired of sitting still so long, and listening to me.

E. Oh ! no, mamma ; I am not at all tired ; I want to know whether Noah ever came out of that ark again.

M. You shall hear all about that another time ; I have a great deal more to tell you about Noah, but it must not be to-night.

E. Well, mamma, do just tell me what sort of wood Noah built his ark of. I think an oak would have been best for it ; I think he was wise enough to choose an oak.

M. Perhaps there were no oaks in that part of the world my love ; for Noah certainly did not build his ark of oak, but of gopher wood ; and he covered it both inside and outside with pitch, to keep it dry. I cannot be quite sure, what sort of tree the

gopher wood comes from ; but some think it was the cypress, a tree which grows very much in Babylonia, which is the name of that part of Asia where Noah is thought to have lived. The cypress was a good deal used in that country for building ships. It is a light wood, and does not easily decay. But when you grow up, I hope you will be able to read the language in which this story was first written, and then you will see what learned men have said about the gopher wood.

E. Was not the Bible written at first in the language that we speak, mamma ?

M. No, my dear ; it was written in the language of the Israelites, which is called Hebrew ; but learned men have put it into English, and other languages, for the use of those who cannot read Hebrew. We will, however, talk more about languages some other time : now I cannot answer any more questions, but must send Edward at once to his pillow.

FOURTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE RAINBOW.

M. WELL, Edward, I see you are quite ready for me : I suppose you want very much to know what became of Noah whom we left last Sunday evening in the ark, in the midst of the great waters, not one speck of dry land, not a single green tree, no, not even one little leaf to be seen ;—nothing but the wide, wide waters all around him. I dare say you have been thinking of Noah all through the week.

E. Oh yes, mamma ; I have thought of him very, very often, and wished that Sunday evening would come again. Now it is come, and you will tell me all about Noah. I am afraid God should have forgotten him, and left him always in that ark.

M. No, Edward ; Noah was not forgotten. The Bible tells us that “ God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark.” And God made a wind to pass over the earth, which dried up the waters. The waves also of the great sea were obliged to go back to their proper place ; the windows of heaven were shut, and the rain from heaven was stopped ; till at last, in the seventh month, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.

E. Oh ! mamma, how glad Noah must have been when he felt the ark touch the land again. I think he got out directly.

M. No ; he could not leave the ark so soon as you think, Edward : for although the rain had stopped, the earth was still covered with water, which would take some time to dry. Even the tops of the mountains were not seen for three months after the ark rested on Mount Ararat.

E. Where is Mount Ararat, mamma ?

M. Mount Ararat is in the middle of a great chain of mountains, called Taurus ; which are to be found in that part of Asia called Armenia. Ararat is supposed to have been the highest of these mountains. It was called by the Persians, Asis, or the happy mountain ; because God had chosen it for the spot on which Noah’s ark was to rest. Soon after Noah had seen the tops of the mountains, he sent out a little dove to

see if the ground were dry. Noah thought that, if the dove could find any dry ground she would not come back again to the ark any more. But after flying about a long time, the little dove found no spot of dry ground on which she could rest her foot, and she went back again to Noah. Now Noah knew, when he saw the dove come back again, that the waters must be still upon the ground ; he therefore waited a week more patiently in the ark, and then he sent her out again. Still the dove came back to him ; only this time, she had an olive leaf in her mouth ; and Noah was glad, when he saw the olive leaf, for he knew then, that the waters must have been drying away, and that the trees had began to appear again, even those that grow, as the olive does, in valleys and low parts of the earth. Once more, after waiting another week, he sent forth the little dove ; but she came back to him no more ; for the earth was pleasant again.

E. And, mamma, I dare say she wanted to build herself a nest in one of those fresh green trees, Do you think she built her nest in an olive tree, mamma ?

M. I think it is very likely, because I believe doves, pigeons, and many other birds, are fond of the olive tree, which grows in great abundance in the country about Mount Ararat. After Noah had lost his little dove, he must have been sure that the earth was dry ; and he took the top of the ark off to look, and there he saw dry land again. Then God B.C. called to Noah, and told him to come out of the ark, and to bring out every thing that was with him. And Noah did as God told him.

E. How long had Noah been in the ark, mamma?

M. He seems to have been there just one year from the time he went in.

E. Did he find any house to go to?

M. No; I suppose he and his sons were obliged to build houses for themselves again. But the first thing this righteous man thought of, was to build an altar, and offer sacrifices to the Lord; to shew how thankful he was to God for having taken care of him and his family for so long a time in the ark. By the blood which he shed in these sacrifices, Noah wished also to shew that he felt that he too was a sinner, and had deserved to die in the late deluge; and that it was by God's mercy alone that he had been saved alive, when his fellow-creatures were dying around him, and when every living thing had been destroyed. Noah did not forget God, because he was happy, and out of danger again, but made haste to thank him for his goodness. All good people will follow Noah's example. When they are in danger and trouble, they will trust in God; and when bright days come again, they will not forget him, who was their best friend when they were unhappy.

E. Was God pleased with Noah for building an altar to him, so soon after he got out of the ark?

M. Yes; God was much pleased with his servant Noah, and he told him that he would never drown the world any more with a flood. Thus Noah drew down a blessing, not only on himself, but on the whole world. Then, after he had made this promise to Noah, God was pleased to place in the sky that beautiful bow, which you see so often after rain, and which

pleases you so by its bright colours. God put it there to show, that he would never forget the promise he had been pleased to make to Noah.

E. Mamma, you mean the rainbow? I love the rainbow.

M. I know you do; and when you look at it, you must think of God's anger against the old world, and of his mercy to the new. We are told that, when the Jews see the rainbow, they bless God; and shall not we bless him too.

E. Mamma, I am very glad this pretty world is never to be drowned any more; I quite believe that it never will be drowned again, because God has said so.

M. That is the best reason for believing it, my dear; but though this pretty world is never to be drowned again, the Bible tells us that it is, one day, to be burned up with fire. Yes, this earth, and those beautiful bright heavens which are above it, shall one day melt away in the great heat of that fire, which God shall send to destroy the world, and all the wicked people that shall then be found in it. That day will be as dreadful to the wicked, as the flood was to the people of the old world. But to the righteous, to those who, like Noah, have believed in God and obeyed him, that day will be far less terrible. They will not care much for this world being burnt with fire; for they will be looking for a much better world than this, which God has promised them in his holy Word;—new heavens and new earth, full of righteousness. God will be able to take as much care of the righteous when he burns this world, as he did of Noah when he drowned the

old world. You know, that God can do every thing ; so you will believe that he can destroy the world and make another in its stead. You know too, that our Lord Jesus Christ died to get a place in heaven for all those who trust in him, and live as he has taught them to live. In that great day, when this earth shall be burned up with fire, our blessed Saviour will be there to take care of all those who belong to him :—they will be as safe with our Lord Jesus Christ, as Noah was in the ark.

FIFTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

E. MAMMA, were all the people in the world very good after the Flood ? Were they very much afraid of making God angry again ; and did they try very hard to please him ?

M. This ought to have been the case, Edward : but I am afraid it was not so. The world was soon full of people again ; and as they must all have heard how the old world had been punished for its wickedness, one would think they would have been much afraid of provoking God's anger again. Hardly, however, had a hundred years gone by after Noah came out of the ark, before we read in the Bible of proud men, who seemed to forget God, and to think too much of pleasing themselves, and making themselves great. They chose Nimrod for their king, who was a great man amongst them, and a mighty hunter.

He was afterwards king of a great city, called Babylon, which you will read about some day, when you are old enough. These men went a long way towards the east, until they came to the land of Shinar. Shinar is that part of Assyria where Babylon stood, and all the country up the river Tigris, as far as the mountains of Armenia. Now, when these men had come to Shinar, they said : " Let us build us a city and tower, whose top shall reach unto heaven." How foolish are they who set about any kind of work in a proud and vain manner, without asking God to bless them in it; as if earth and even heaven were theirs, and they could do just as they liked ! God was angry with them ; not for building a city or a tower, but for wishing in their pride to be as high and as great as God himself, and for forgetting, as they seem to have done, that God's kingdom ruleth over all. Hear how they speak ! " Let us build a city and tower whose top may reach unto *heaven*." See how proud they are ! they wish not only to be great and high, but as great and high as God himself.

E. Mamma, they could not build the tower unless God chose that they should—could they, mamma ?

M. No, my dear, they tried in vain to get on with their work, because God set himself against it. " The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded :" and God, who can read the hearts of men, knew that, if He let them finish their work, they would become more proud and wicked still. Therefore he put a stop to it in a moment.

E. How did God put a stop to their work, mamma?

M. You shall hear, Edward. From the beginning of the world till this time, men had all spoken the same language ; that is, they used the same words ; so that all could understand each other. They had also, till now, all lived in the same part of the world. But God did not mean that it should always be so. He wished that men should spread over the world, and not all remain in one spot together. And at the very moment when Nimrod and his men were in the midst of their work, and had set their hearts upon building a great city, and living in it together, God put a stop to it by making them all speak different languages, so that they could not understand each other, and therefore could not work together. Thus God, by his almighty power, hindered them from finishing their work, and scattered them about, all over the world : and the name of the city they had begun to build, was called Babel or Babylon, which means confusion.

From this story we must learn never to set up our own will against God's will. God hates pride ; and very often, when men become very great in their own eyes, and forget God ; he, for their own good, brings them very low. We are all by nature, fond of having our own will : but God's will must be done. We say every day in our prayers, " Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Now we know that, in heaven, the holy angels do God's will very gladly, and never set up their own wishes against his. You and I, my dear little boy, and all who wish one day to live with those happy angels, must try to love and obey God's will as they do.

SIXTH SUNDAY EVENING.

HISTORY OF ABRAHAM.

E. MAMMA, you said this morning, that you were going to talk to me about Abraham to-night. I am glad we have got to the history of so good a man. I know Abraham was one of the best men that ever lived, because my little Catechism calls him the Friend of God. Mamma, I want to know all that Abraham did, to make God so much pleased with him.

M. I will try to tell you all that you wish to know about this good man, who was blest with so much of God's favour and love. When we first read of Abraham in the Bible, he was living with all his family, in a land called Ur of the Chaldees. Ur of the Chaldees was that part of Mesopotamia which lies next to Assyria. The people who were living in this land had forgot the true God of heaven and earth, and worshipped idols; that is, they knelt down and prayed to all sorts of things, even to the very stones and trees, instead of unto God. God did not choose that his servant Abraham should live amongst such a people, and he told him to get out from his own country, and from his own people, and to go into the land of Canaan. And to comfort **B. C.** Abraham, and to make him feel happy in 1921. leaving his own land, God promised that, if he obeyed his voice, he would bless him very exceedingly, and make him prosper and become great, and

that he would give the land of Canaan to his children and his children's children for their own. And God said also, that in Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed ; by which we are to understand that our Lord Jesus Christ was to be born in the family of Abraham, for he, you know, is the Saviour of the world : and through him all our blessings come from God. Many a person, with less faith in God than Abraham had, would have been very unwilling to leave his own country, and his own people, to go to a strange land, and a strange people, whom he knew nothing about. But the faithful Abraham did not wait to think of all this. He knew that God could be to him more than all that he had left behind ; he knew that God could make any country, however far off and strange, a sweet home to him. God had promised to bless him : and Abraham was sure that, if the blessing of God went with him, he should be happier in the land of Canaan, than he had ever been before. Therefore he waited not, but departed from his own country, as the Lord had told him, and took with him Sarah, his wife, and Lot his nephew, and all that he had, and went into the land of Canaan. In the course of his life, Abraham had often to move from the place where he was settled, at God's command ; not living in a comfortable fixed home, but pitching his tents for a time wherever God wished him to live. Nor did Abraham complain, as many would have done, at this : for he believed the promises of God, though they were still far off ; and he knew that it did not matter much where he lived in this world ; for he was to be here but for a very little while ; his real

home was in heaven, and when once he got there, he should go no more out, but live there, without any change, for ever and ever. This was Abraham's faith, and therefore he left Ur of the Chaldees, and went into the land of Canaan.

E. Where is the land of Canaan, mamma?

M. It is in Asia, my love, between the Mediterranean sea and the mountains of Arabia, and reaches from Egypt to Phœnicia. As it is of all lands, the most interesting to Christians, we will get the map and see exactly how it is bounded. Now you can see that Canaan has the mountains of Lebanon on the north ; the wilderness of Paran, Idumea, and Egypt on the south ; the mountains of Arabia on the east ; and on the west the Mediterranean, which used to be called the Great Sea. The land of Canaan has been called, at different times, by many different names, all of which you must try to remember. First, it was called the land of Canaan, after Canaan, one of Noah's grandchildren ; then Palestine, from the people whom the Hebrews called Philistines, but the Greeks and Romans called them Palestines : after this, it was called the land of Promise, because it was the land God promised to Abraham ; then the land of Israel, because the Israelites lived there ; and the land of Judah, from the Jews. Last of all, this blessed spot was called the Holy Land, because there our Lord Jesus Christ was born, and lived, and died, and rose again. It is as you see but a small country, yet one that must ever be dear to Christians.

But I dare say you wish to hear more of Abraham. One of the first things we read about him, after he got to the land of Canaan, is his kindness to his ne-

phew Lot, who had moved with him from the land of his fathers. Abraham and Lot lived together at first ; but they grew rich, and had a great many servants and cattle ; and the servants of Lot and the servants of Abraham quarrelled, and could not live in peace with one another. This grieved Abraham, for, like all good men, he loved peace, and hated quarrelling. At last Abraham thought it was better for them to part, and to live in different places. Now some parts of the country were much richer and better and more beautiful than others ; but Abraham was not anxious to get the best of every thing ; he wished to please Lot rather than himself, and he begged him to look all around him, and to choose whichever part of the land he liked best. Then Lot looked and saw that all the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, and beautiful as the garden of the Lord ; so he chose the plain of Jordan, and pitched his tent near Sodom and Gomorrah. But Lot had soon reason to be sorry for his choice ; for the people who lived in Sodom were exceedingly wicked, and he was soon obliged to leave those beautiful plains, and his flocks and herds, and all that he had, when God burnt those wicked cities with fire from heaven. But Abraham, who had been so fond of peace, and so willing to let Lot have the best of the land, instead of keeping it for himself, was blessed in what Lot had left him ; for God made him rich and great. Now, Edward, I hope you will remember this part of Abraham's story, and learn from it to hate quarrelling, and to be ready even to give up your own wishes, for the sake of kindness and peace.

E. Mamma, when I am going to be unkind and selfish, I will think of Abraham, and try to love my brother better than myself.

M. That is just what I wish, my dear boy ; and I am quite sure that you will be much happier, when you are trying to please others, than when you are only thinking what you like yourself. Selfish people are not happy. But God will bless a little child who tries to follow the example of those good men, whom he reads of in the Bible : God will make that child happy.

E. Mamma, had Abraham any children ?

M. Not when he first went into the land of Canaan ; but, some years after, God gave him a son, who was called Isaac. Abraham and Sarah were very happy when God gave them this child, and they loved him very dearly ; more dearly than any of the other blessings which God had given them. And the child grew up, and made glad the hearts of his parents. And it came to pass after this, that God did try Abraham's faith. For he called to Abraham and said, " take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go unto the land of Moriah ; and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of." Now God did this to try his servant Abraham, to prove whether he really would obey his voice in every thing, and whether he loved God better than his son Isaac, who was so very dear to him ; and could part even with that only son at God's command. Abraham had, till this time, always obeyed God in every thing, but God had never tried him so much before. That son whom God had given, and whom

Abraham had loved; that son he was to offer up himself, as a sacrifice to the Lord, that thus all people, to the end of the world, when they should read the story of Abraham, might see how great was his faith and obedience, and how well he deserved to be called, as he has been, "the father of the faithful."

E. Oh! mamma, I do not think Abraham could obey God then.

M. If he had not had a great deal of faith, I do not think he could have done so; but Abraham believed in God, and trusted in his mercy, feeling sure that God would not desire him to do any thing which was not really for his own good. Then, much as he loved Isaac, he loved God still better; God had given him that son, and he felt that he ought to be ready to give him back at God's command. "Therefore Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took Isaac his son with him, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. And when they came unto the place, Abraham built an altar, and laid wood upon it, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand to slay his son." But God, who had seen his servant Abraham's faith and obedience, his trust in his mercy and goodness, and how willing he was to do whatever he told him: this great and gracious God, called to Abraham out of heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham; lay not thine hand upon the lad; neither do thou any thing unto him; for now know I that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Then Abraham unbound Isaac, and offered up a ram,

which he found ready on the spot, instead of his son, as a burnt-offering to the Lord. Surely no one could be half so happy as the faithful Abraham at that moment, when he found how pleasing his conduct had been in the sight of God, and heard God call him blessed. Think how full of joy he must have been when God gave him back his son again, and he was able to take him once more to his mother.

Now this beautiful account of Abraham was written in the Bible for our sakes, that we might admire his faith, and try to walk in the steps of it. We may often be called upon by God, though not quite in the same way, to part with something that is very dear to us; as dear to us, perhaps, as Isaac was to Abraham: and happy and blessed shall we be too, if we can obey God in every thing, and love his will better than our own. If we hope one day to see Abraham in heaven, we must try to believe and obey God, as he did. But there is another thing which the history of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac was meant to teach us. It is to think of God's great love to us, in offering up his only son, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world: for he was really sacrificed, and died many years after, on that very mountain where Abraham built his altar, and offered up his son. Isaac was only offered, not slain. Jesus Christ, God's only Son, was really sacrificed on the sad altar of the painful cross: yet he too was raised again from the dead, and went back to his Father's house in heaven. Therefore, when we read of Isaac, we must think of Jesus Christ! I dare say Abraham thought of him

with joy ; because our Saviour said to the Jews ; " Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ; and he saw it and was glad."

E. Mamma, what did you say, was the name of the mountain where Abraham offered up Isaac ?

M. It was called Moriah. One part of this mountain was named Mount Zion, and was within the city of Jerusalem. There Solomon many years after built the temple of the Lord. The other part of the mountain was called Mount Calvary, and lay outside of the city. On this part of the mountain it is said that Abraham offered up his son Isaac, and we know that here our Blessed Redeemer shed that precious blood, which was to take away the sins of the world.

SEVENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

ESAU AND JACOB.

E. MAMMA, what are you going to talk to me about to-night ?

M. I am now going to tell you, Edward, some of the history of Jacob.

Isaac had a wife named Rebekah. He loved her very much, and they seemed to have lived a quiet and happy life together. For many years they had no children, but at last God heard their prayers, and gave them two sons, whom they named Esau and Jacob. Esau was the eldest of these two brothers ; but he does not seem to have been a good man : he did not fear God, nor take much

pains to please him, nor did he care much for the blessing of God.

E. Was Jacob a good man, mamma?

M. Yes, Jacob was a religious man; he loved God, and thought his promises and blessings of more worth than any thing in the world besides. But you will find, as you know more of the Bible, that none of the servants of God, not even the very best of them, were quite good; "There is none that doeth good, and sinneth not." All mankind, since Adam's fall, have been sinners; all have had evil hearts within them, inclined to do wrong; all have done many things they ought not; and have left undone, those things which they ought to have done. The holiest men that ever lived have felt themselves sinners before God; and have had reason to be glad that God had opened to them a way of pardon. The holy Jesus, was the only person who ever lived amongst us without sin. He was holy, harmless, without any spot of sin, and quite separate from sinners. He was not only free from sin himself, but so pure and holy, that he was able to offer himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind; and it is only through his death that we can hope for the pardon of our many sins, or that those faithful men, whom we read of in the Bible, found forgiveness of their faults. But I will go on with the history of Jacob, and you will see better what I mean.

You remember, what great blessings and promises God gave to Abraham; and how he had said, that these blessings should not be his only, but should go to his children and his children's children for

ever. Isaac had found God's promises to be true, for the blessings of his father, Abraham, had rested on him also. And as Esau was his eldest child, and he loved him very much, Isaac wished exceedingly that the promised blessings might belong to him. And Esau expected to have them ; and, though he cared but little for them, really, as you will soon see, yet he thought he was sure of them, and he called them his birthright.

E. What did he mean by birthright, mamma ?

M. He meant that, as he was born first, he had a better right than Jacob to these promises and blessings, which were to go from father to son. But Rebekah, their mother, loved Jacob best, and therefore was very anxious, that he should have the blessing. Besides which, Rebekah knew, and so did Isaac also, that God meant Jacob to have it; for God had told her so; and she was sorry to see Isaac wishing to act against God's will. She therefore taught her son Jacob, that the blessing ought to be his, and did all she could to make him wish to have it. Esau and Jacob were not at all like one another in any thing; Esau was fond of hunting, and lived much in the fields; but Jacob was a plain man, of a more gentle nature, and was a good deal at home with his father and mother. And one day, when Esau had been out a long time hunting, and had had nothing to eat, he came home very faint with hunger; and he said unto Jacob, "Feed me I pray thee, for I am faint." Now I think Jacob ought to have had pity on his brother, and to have given him some food directly. But, instead of that, he would not give him any, unless Esau would

promise to give him up his birthright. "And Esau said, behold I am now at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" And he gave Jacob his birthright, for a morsel of food! So little did Esau care for what he called his birthright! So little did he think of the blessings of God! Surely if he had been a good man, he would sooner have borne patiently with the greatest degree of hunger, than have given away the blessing of God for a little food! What could ever have made up to him for such a loss? If he lived, what a comfort the blessing of God had been to him all his life long! and if he died, was there any thing else that could be of any use to him in the world to come? That world, where it matters little whether we may have been full or hungry, rich or poor, here, if we have but made sure of God's favour and love!

Now does Edward think that he really understands all that I have been telling him about Esau selling his birthright?

E. Yes, mamma! I quite understand all that you have said. Go on; I like this story very much. I want to know whether Isaac did bless Jacob.

M. You shall hear. We learn from the Bible, that some time after this, when Isaac was old and could not see, and when he thought perhaps that he might not have much longer to live, he wished to bless his son Esau before he died. "And he called him, and said unto him, my son, behold! now I am old, and know not the day of my death; now therefore, take I pray thee thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison, and make me savoury meat, such as I

love, and bring it to me that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Esau went to the field, to hunt for venison and to bring it." Now Rebekah heard what Isaac said unto his son; and she was afraid that Isaac would really give the blessing to Esau, and that Jacob would lose it. Now in her very great wish that Jacob should be blessed, and to prevent her husband Isaac from doing wrong in his old age, by going against the will of God, she was led to do herself, and to lead Jacob to do, an action, which must have been very sinful in the sight of God. For she called Jacob unto her, and told him to fetch her two good kids from the flock, that she might make them into savoury meat for his father, such as he loved; and that then he should take it to Isaac, whilst Esau was in the fields, that Isaac, who was very old and could not see, might think it was his very son Esau, and so bless him before his death. Jacob ought to have felt that this was very wrong, and to have told his mother that he could not do it. But, instead of doing that, he was only afraid that his father might feel him, and find him out, because he had a smooth skin, and his brother Esau was hairy; and that then he should bring down his father's curse upon himself, instead of his blessing. But Rebekah said, "only obey my voice my son, and go fetch me them." Then Jacob went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother; and she made savoury meat of the kids. And she spread the skins of the goats upon Jacob's hands and neck, that if his father felt him, he might seem to be really Esau. Then Rebekah gave the meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hands of

Jacob. And he came unto his father and said, "My father!" And he said who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau, thy first born; I have done as thou badest me; arise, I pray thee; sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, how is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, because the Lord thy God brought it to me. Then Isaac felt him, and thought that it was his very son Esau: and he said "the voice is Jacob's voice; but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he gave Jacob the blessing.

Yes, Edward, you may well look shocked and surprised. That a man who feared God, could have acted so deceitful a part by his aged father, and so unkind and cruel a part by his brother, is indeed very sad! A proof that we have sinful hearts within us, by nature inclined to do evil, when even a good man could fall into so great a sin!

E. Did Esau know what Jacob had done?

M. Yes; he came in from hunting very soon after, and carried his venison to his father. And Isaac his father said unto him, "Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first born Esau. Then Isaac trembled very exceedingly; and said, Who? Where is he that hath taken venison and brought it to me, and I have blessed him: yea, and he shall be blessed! And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry; and said unto his father, bless me, even me also, O my father! And he said, thy brother came, and hath taken away thy blessing." But Esau could not be satisfied: "And he said, hast thou but one blessing

left, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice and wept!" Then Isaac, who was sorry for his son, blessed him with the best blessing he could; but he could not give him such blessings as he had given to his brother.

E. Thus Jacob gained the promised blessing! But could either he or his mother have been happy in *thus* gaining it?

M. Indeed, none of them could have been happy. And why? because each one of them had acted wrong in this matter. And when we do what we know to be wrong, it is in vain that we try to be happy; even though we have got the wish of our hearts! Isaac had been very wrong in wishing to act against the will of God, and in trying to give those blessings to Esau, which God had said should belong to his brother. Esau was very wrong in caring so little for his birthright, and being so ready to part with the blessings which he thought to be his. Rebekah and Jacob were sadly wrong in deceiving Isaac. They were quite right in wishing so much for the blessing which God had promised Jacob: but they ought not to have done evil, that good might come. How much better would it have been, if they had waited patiently God's time; and trusted in him! Then with what joy might they have seen the will of God brought to pass! But now they have changed that home, which was once so peaceful and happy, into a dwelling of strife and sorrow!.

E. Mamma, did God punish them?

M. Yes, God punished them all; for he hates sin: and he shews his anger against it in some way or other, even in the best men. Isaac was punished

by being disappointed in his wish of blessing Esau, and in seeing that son, whom he loved so well, careless of those things which ought to have been most dear to him. The Bible tells us, that his conduct was a grief of mind to his tender parent. Good men always see their faults, and feel sorry for them. Isaac seems to have felt how wrong he had been in wishing to go against God ; for when he found that he had blessed Jacob instead of Esau, he said, " I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed." Esau was punished, as you know, by altogether losing that blessing, which he once cared so little for ; he found it impossible to get it afterwards, " though he sought it carefully with tears."

E. How was Rebekah punished, mamma ?

M. She was punished far more than Isaac, for her sin had been greater. Think what she must have felt, loving Jacob as she did, when she heard Esau say in his anger against his brother, that he would kill him ! Think what she must have felt, when she was obliged, for fear of his brother, to send him away from his home ; to part with her beloved child ; to lose the delight of having him with her, to comfort her with his duty and love ; the pleasure of watching over him herself, and of doing him good ! Think, again, what must have been Rebekah's sorrow, when she found, after she had parted with him, that she should see his face no more ! When she sent him away, she thought she was only losing him for a little while : for she promised to send and fetch him again, as soon as his brother's anger was passed away. But so it was not to be ; her eyes were never more gladdened by the sight of Jacob ! Rebekah seems to have

died while he was absent from his father's house. As to Jacob, his punishment began when he was obliged to fly from his home; but it did not end there. He was punished in all the sorrows of his life, which were very many; and of which you may some day read a full account in the Word of God. But they were such as obliged Jacob himself to say, when he was an old man, " Few and evil have the days of my life been."

Here we must leave off for to-night, to talk more about Jacob, I hope, another time.

EIGHTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE LADDER FROM HEAVEN.

E. MAMMA, we are to talk about Jacob again to-night; for you said you had more to tell me about him. I want to know, whether he went away from his home, as soon as he had got the blessing.

M. Yes, Isaac and Rebekah seem to have sent him away very soon after. But Isaac called him to him, and blessed him again before he went, and told him to go to Padanaram, a country a great way off in Mesopotamia, to the house of Laban, his mother's brother. And the last words his father Isaac said to him were, " God Almighty bless thee, my son, and give thee the blessing of Abraham." Then Jacob departed, and went towards Padanaram.

E. Poor Jacob! I am very sorry for him, mamma. Are not you sorry?

M. Yes, my love; we cannot help feeling grieved for him; for his heart must have been full of sorrow. But, though obliged to leave his earthly parents, his heavenly Father was with him. God is always near at hand to comfort those who are sorry for their sins. For "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." God did not leave Jacob long without comfort. The next thing we read of him is, that as he was going towards Haran, night came on, and as there was no house near for him to go to, he was obliged to lie down to sleep upon the cold ground, with nothing but stones for his pillow. But I dare say Jacob had sweeter rest here than he had ever known in his own comfortable bed in his father's house. For, in his sleep, he saw a ladder, one end of which was upon the earth, and the other end reached to heaven. Upon this ladder the blessed angels of God were ascending and descending, to watch over the sleep of Jacob, and to protect him from all harm. Surely Jacob could have feared no evil, with such a glorious company of angels round his head! But, whilst he was wondering, I dare say, why these heavenly beings should be hovering about his pillow; behold, the Lord himself stood above the ladder. And lest Jacob should be afraid, God spoke to him, and said: "I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And then, because Jacob was poor, and had nothing that he could call his own, God told him, that the very country in which he was then sleeping should be given to him, and to his children after him. And then to comfort him, whilst a wanderer

from his father's house, and alone, the Lord said unto him, "behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land ; for I will not leave thee." Oh ! how Jacob must have been comforted by these gracious words ; in which the great God of heaven and earth himself promised to be with him every where ; to take care of him, and to bring him back to his home again ! But when he awaked out of his sleep, and most likely recollected how he had offended God, he was afraid, and said : "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not ! How dreadful is this place ! This is none other but the house of God ; this is the gate of heaven !" And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stones he had put for his pillow, and put them up in a heap to mark the spot where God had thus appeared to him, that he might know it, if ever he came back to his father's house again. And he called the name of the place, "Bethel ;" which means "the house of God." And then Jacob said, that if he found God with him, to keep him in the way that he went, and to give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and to bring him back to his father's house in peace ; then in this very spot where he had now set up a pillar of stones, he would build an altar, and offer sacrifices of praise to the Lord his God.

E. Oh ! mamma what a beautiful story that is of the ladder from heaven ! How glad Jacob must have been, to have seen those blessed angels going up and down upon it.

M. Yes, Edward, it must indeed have been a glorious sight, and intended, I have no doubt, not

only for Jacob's comfort, but for all those who love and serve the God of Jacob. This ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, may teach us, that though God is in heaven, and we are on earth, yet he is always near to watch over those who fear and love him. And as Jacob saw the angels of God going up and down upon the ladder, even so those glorious beings are still sent to hover round the heads of the righteous. True, we cannot see them as Jacob did, but they are, nevertheless, all around and about us, both when we lie down, and when we rise up, and are always watching over us to do us good. Let us remember, then, in what glorious company we are ; and let us be very careful that we do not, by our sins, drive those holy beings from us !

E. Mamma, had Jacob still a very long way to go ?

M. Yes, he had a long way to travel, but God was with him, and brought him safely to the house of his uncle Laban, who lived in Haran. And now, if you will bring the first volume of the Family Bible to me, I will shew you, in those nice clear maps, all the places we have spoken of lately. Here you may see Beersheba, where Isaac and Rebekah were living, when Jacob left them ; and Bethel, where he set up his pillar ; and here we may see Haran, in the land of Padanaram, where he went to his uncle Laban.

E. How long did Jacob live with Laban ?

M. He lived with him twenty years : and they were years of a good deal of sorrow to Jacob. He did not like to live with Laban without making himself useful to him ; and so he took the charge of all his flocks and herds ; and whilst he lived the life of

a shepherd, feeding and keeping the flock of Laban, he suffered much from the heat by day, and from the cold by night. For in that part of Asia where he was living, though the days are always hot, the nights are often extremely cold. But still more did Jacob suffer from the unkindness of Laban; who broke his promises to Jacob many times, and did not use him at all well, although Jacob did his duty very faithfully by Laban; so much so, that Laban himself was obliged to say, that he had learned that the Lord had blessed him for Jacob's sake. But God did not leave Jacob in his troubles; he comforted and supported him through them all, and blessed him so much, that, whilst he did his duty to Laban, he became very rich himself also. At length it pleased God that Jacob should return to the land of his fathers; and, at God's command, he gladly left Laban, and set off to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. And Jacob set his wives and his children upon camels, and took with him his cattle, and all that he had, and went out of Padanaram. And Jacob passed over the river Euphrates, and went towards mount Gilead. And after he had travelled a long way, he was obliged, before he could get to his father's house, to pass through the country of Edom, which belonged to his brother Esau; and there he heard, that his brother was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Then Jacob was greatly afraid, for he thought that Esau would now certainly slay him, and his wives and his children. Jacob was quite unable to save himself, or any of his family from the hands of Esau, but he called upon the Lord in his trouble, which

was the best thing he could do. And Jacob prayed unto God ; and said, " O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau ; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." And Jacob sent some of his servants on before, with a message of peace and love, and a present for his brother, that he might if possible soften Esau's heart towards him. Good men do every thing that is prudent and wise to save themselves from danger ; but at the same time they do not trust to themselves, but look unto God to help them. Thus Jacob sent a message and a present to his brother, whilst he earnestly entreated God to save him from his hands. And God appeared unto Jacob, and comforted him ; and God heard his humble prayer, and changed the heart of his brother towards him, taking away all his anger against Jacob, and filling him with love towards him instead. For Esau ran to meet Jacob, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. And Esau was very kind to his brother, and after he had been with him a little while, left him again in peace, and returned to his own country. Then Jacob went on his way and came again to Bethel ; that very spot where he had slept when he first left his father's house, alone and poor then, but now surrounded by his own family, rich in flocks and herds, and about to return to his father's house in peace. So sure and true had Jacob found the promises of God,

made to him in that very spot! And Jacob did not forget how God had been with him in all his troubles, and how he had blessed and comforted him. And he made haste to build an altar unto God, and called the name of the place, El-bethel, which means the God of Bethel. And God appeared unto Jacob again and blessed him, and told him, that he should be no more called Jacob, but Israel; and he called his name Israel.

E. Mamma, did Jacob go back to his father's house again?

M. Yes, my love; God gave Jacob the great happiness of seeing his aged father once more. He got home just in time to see Isaac before his death; for he was now an hundred and eighty years old; and he died very soon after, being an old man, full of days, and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

E. Now, mamma, we have some more places to look for in the map. I want to see the river Euphrates, and mount Gilead, and the land of Edom, and then to look at Bethel again.

M. I think we may just have time to do this, before you go to bed.



NINTH SUNDAY EVENING.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

E. WHERE did Jacob live, mamma, after Isaac's death?

M. Israel, for that is his name now, dwelt with all his children in that land where Abraham and Isaac

had lived as strangers ;—I mean, in the Land of Canaan.

E. Had he many children ?

M. Yes, my love ; he had twelve sons and one daughter. His sons were shepherds, keeping the flocks of their father. Now one of the youngest of these sons, whose name was Joseph, was more beloved by his father than any of the others, partly for the sake of his mother, Rachel. For Rachel was Israel's beloved wife ; but she had died when he was returning to his father's house. She had been so dear to Israel, that, though she was now laid in the grave out of his sight, he still loved her, and thought of her, and wept for her loss. “ And Israel loved Joseph the child of Rachel more than all his children, and he made him a coat of many colours.” And Joseph, who was very good, was a comfort to his father, after his mother's death. But “ when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him :” they treated him unkindly, and quarrelled with him continually. And Joseph told his brothers of a very strange dream that he had, where he thought that his father and mother, and all his brothers, had bowed down to him. And they were very angry with him for his dream, and said : “ Shalt thou indeed reign over us ? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.” And his kind father found fault gently with him, for telling this dream, and for feeling, perhaps, vain about it. At the same time, however, whilst his brothers hated him for it, the good old Israel thought that the dream might have been sent

by God. For in those times it often pleased God to make known his will and his wishes to his servants by their dreams, that is, by the thoughts he put into their minds when they were asleep. In this way he often told them what he wished them to do, or what he meant to do with them, or for them. And Joseph's dream must have been sent by God; because it afterwards came to pass, as you will see by and bye. Now Israel, who thought the dream must have come from God, paid great attention to it. Soon after this, Joseph's brothers were feeding their father's flock in Shechem, a place at a great distance from their father's house, which was in the valley of Hebron. It is the custom of shepherds to move their flocks from place to place continually, wherever they can find pleasant pastures for them. And Israel was anxious to hear of his children; and he said unto Joseph: "Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. Go, I pray thee, and see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again." So he sent Joseph out of the valley of Hebron; and he came unto Shechem, to see if his brothers were well. But his brothers were gone farther on, to Dothan; and he went after his brethren, and found them on Dothan. But the hearts of these wicked brothers had not grown any kinder towards Joseph. They still hated him, and were angry with him for his dreams, and when they saw him coming towards them, they agreed together to put him to death. And they said one to another, "Behold this dreamer cometh: Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and

we will say some evil beast hath devoured him." Little did Joseph think, when he left his kind and aged father, and went, at his desire, to ask after his brothers, that he should return to his home no more! Little could the aged Israel have known of the wicked hatred of his brothers towards him; or he would not have trusted his beloved child in their hands! Whilst these wicked men were talking thus, Joseph came up to them; and they would certainly have killed him, had not Reuben, the eldest of them, felt some pity towards him, and some fear, perhaps, of staining his hands with such innocent blood, some dread of the anger of the God of Israel. For Reuben said; "Let us not kill him: shed no blood; but cast him into this pit in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him." This Reuben said to save his life; for he meant to take Joseph out of the pit again, and to give him back to his father. These wicked men listened to the voice of Reuben, so far as not to kill Joseph; but they stript him of his coat, that coat of many colours, which his father had given him, and took him, and cast him into a pit, intending to leave him there, in that lonely wilderness, to be devoured by wild beasts, or to die of hunger. Their hearts were shut against their brother; they listened not to his prayers and cries; —his tears could not soften their hard and cruel breasts;—they felt no pity for Joseph, nor yet for their aged father, who so tenderly loved the lad. So little did they care for all this, that as soon as they had done the wicked deed, they sat down to eat bread! And here let us stop for a moment, to think

what a frightful thing sin is. How full of danger we are, if we let any sin get into our hearts and stay there, without trying all we can to drive it away. It may be a small sin at first; but, before it leaves us, it may become deep and deadly, and fill us with shame and misery for ever. Joseph's brothers began by envying him and treating him unkindly. Then they hated him. At last they try to kill him. And so used are they now to sin, that the thought of what they have done, does not even frighten them or make them unhappy. See them sit down to eat bread, near that very spot where they have left their brother to perish with hunger! And it came to pass that, while they were eating bread, they saw a party of men called Ishmaelites passing by, who came from Gilead, with their camels loaded with spices, balm, and myrrh, which they were going to carry into Egypt. Then Judah, another of Joseph's brothers, who perhaps was beginning to feel the wickedness of what they had been doing, said to the rest: "What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brethren liked what he said; and they drew him out of the pit, and sold him as a slave to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. Thus was Joseph saved from a dreadful death; but, by the same hands that drew him from the pit, was he given over as a slave to strange people; to be carried into a strange land, there to suffer any miseries his masters might choose to put upon him. And this was that Joseph, who

had been the darling child of his father, and had always been treated by him with so much tenderness and love.

E. Mamma, did Reuben see him sold as a slave?

M. No; Reuben seems to have known nothing about it; for we are told that he went back again to the pit, to look for Joseph. But, behold! his cruel brothers had been there before him, and Joseph was not in the pit! Then Reuben was full of grief; for he had meant to take the lad back to his father. And he returned to his brethren, and said: "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go." Then these wicked men "took Joseph's coat and killed a kid, and dipped the coat in the blood;" and they took the coat all covered with blood to their father, "and said, this have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." And Israel knew the coat; "and said it is my son's coat: an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Then Jacob rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth to shew how he grieved for his son; and he mourned for him many days. And his sons and daughter tried in vain to comfort him; for he wept for Joseph, and would not be comforted, because he was not. And he said "I will go down to the grave for my son mourning." Thus his father wept for him. Such was the misery that these cruel men brought upon their aged parent.

E. Mamma, I want very much to know what became of poor Joseph after he was sold by his brothers. He must have been very unhappy.

M. Yes, my love; his heart must have been full of sorrow; as he travelled along with those strange men,

thinking of the home that he had left, and of the kind father whom he should, most likely, never see again. Every step that they took carried him further away from him; and thus made him more wretched. But, I dare say, Joseph had been taught by his father to trust in God, and that he looked up to him now, in his great misery, for help and comfort. And, I dare say, Joseph felt very thankful to God, for having saved him from a cruel death, and that he tried to trust in him, to take care of him still. And we shall see that he did not trust in vain. The Bible tells us, that "the Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and in those that trust in his mercy." The merchants who carried Joseph down into Egypt, sold him again to a person named Potiphar, who was one of king Pharaoh's officers, and the captain of those soldiers who are called the royal guards, because they are always about the king. But God had not left Joseph, although he was now sold again as a slave. God is with the righteous in all their sorrows; to comfort and support them, if not to deliver them out of them. And God was certainly with Joseph, and made him a prosperous man. "And his master saw that the Lord was with him; and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper." And Joseph's master was pleased with him, and kind to him, making him the chief servant in all his house, and giving him the care of all that he had. "And the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and upon all that he had in the field." Now in all this we see what a good man Joseph was. See how beautiful his con-

duct is, whilst a slave in the house of Potiphar. Instead of spending his hours in vain and idle sorrow, and in thinking of the time when he was a beloved child in a tender father's house, he is patient and cheerful, contented to be whatever God chooses him to be, industrious in the work that is given him to do, faithful to the master whom he serves. Happy Joseph ! in being able thus to bear the will of God ! Happy Joseph ! in being thus blessed by God in all that he put his hand to ! Yes, I say, happy Joseph ; for though torn from his home, and only a poor slave in a strange land, the blessing and favour of God were with him. And if we would be happy, we must have something of Joseph's temper. His faith in God ; his patience ; his contentment ; his diligence. With tempers such as these, we shall, like Joseph, be happy any where, and any how.

TENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

E. I AM so glad to think, mamma, that Joseph was happy in Egypt.

M. Yes, he was happy for a little while in the house of Potiphar ; but his troubles were not over yet. It pleased God that he should suffer a great deal, that his patience should be tried very much, so that his goodness might shine forth more brightly. When Joseph was in the house of Potiphar, he lived always as before God, doing, in every thing, that, which he thought to be right. But this was not the way in which all about him lived. Even Potiphar's

own wife was a wicked woman; and she tried to make Joseph wicked also. But he would not listen to her. He had been obedient to his master and his mistress in every thing till now; but he would not do what was wicked, even at her command. He knew that his mistress was able to punish him; but he was much more afraid of God's anger than of her's. He said to her; "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Joseph hated sin. Any thing to him was better than sin: nothing so bad as the anger of God. He would sooner part with all that he had, than lose the favour and love of God. Upon this his wicked mistress was so angry with him, that she got his master to put him into prison. Another sad change for Joseph! But to this good man, a prison with God, was far pleasanter, than the most delightful place in the world without him. Oh! let us try to be more like Joseph; to hate sin as he did, and to be ready to lose any thing, or suffer any thing, rather than make God angry with us. Then we shall have God with us, as he was with Joseph; for he did not leave him alone in his sad prison. The Bible tells us, that "the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison." And Joseph was very patient, and tried to make himself useful to the keeper of the prison, who was so pleased with him, that he gave him the care of all the other persons who were with him in the prison. And the Lord blessed the keeper of the prison also, for Joseph's sake. How excellent a thing real piety is! which is not only a blessing to ourselves, but often brings blessings down upon all around us!

What a lesson of patience, and faith in God, we may learn from Jacob's beloved son, whilst he is in prison ! In this, as in all his other troubles, he seems to have seen the hand of God, and, instead of spending his time in useless complaints, to have tried, how he could best serve and please God, and how he could make himself most useful even in a prison. It was the goodness of Joseph that made him first a favourite with his father, then with Potiphar, afterwards with the keeper of the prison, and last of all, as we shall soon see, with Pharaoh himself. In the same prison with Joseph, and placed under his care, were king Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. Now each of these men dreamed a very strange dream ; and was much troubled, because he could not understand it. When Joseph saw that their faces were sad, and learned the cause of their grief, he told them that God only could explain dreams ; and he begged to hear them. The chief butler and baker told their dreams. Now God had given Joseph the power of understanding such dreams, so that he was able to tell them the meaning of theirs. And he told them, that they should both be sent for out of prison ; the chief butler, to serve the king again ; but the chief baker, to be hanged. And so it was. Pharaoh sent for his butler, to wait upon him, as he had done before ; but the chief baker he hanged. After Joseph had told the chief butler the meaning of his dream, he said to him : " Think of me, I pray thee, when it shall be well with thee ; and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. For, indeed,

I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews ; and here, also, have I done nothing that they should put me into this dungeon." I have no doubt that at the time when Joseph said this to him, the butler felt kindly towards him, and meant to be his friend. But no sooner is he out of the prison, than he forgets the person who had been so kind to him there. Full of his own happiness, he never once thinks of the sorrows of Joseph. A word or two to the king, might, perhaps, have made Joseph free. But two long years rolled by and found him still in prison.

E. Oh, mamma ! did he never get out again ?

M. Yes, my love ; it pleased God at the end of that time to bring Joseph out of prison ; and in a wonderful manner. King Pharaoh had two dreams, which he could not at all understand, which troubled him very much. He sent, and called for all the wise men in Egypt ; and told them his dreams ; but there was not one that could explain them to him. Then, for the first time, the chief butler remembered Joseph, and how he had explained to him the meaning of his dream. And he told the king what had happened to him in prison, and how all Joseph's words came to pass. Then the king " sent and called Joseph ; and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and he came into the presence of Pharaoh." And Pharaoh said unto Joseph : " I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it, and I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream." And Joseph said : " It is not in me ; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Joseph was too humble to wish to have the praise himself ; he wished the king to know, that

all his wisdom came from God. Then king Pharaoh told his dreams, and Joseph explained them to him. He told the king that the meaning of his dreams was this: that seven years of great distress were coming upon Egypt, and upon the whole earth, in which there should be a very grievous famine, that is, a great scarcity of corn and food. But that, before that time came, there would be seven years of great plenty, in which there should be a very great abundance of corn, and of all kinds of food; such an abundance, that, if care were taken, there might be plenty laid by for the time of distress. Then Joseph advised Pharaoh to look out a man discreet and wise; and make him ruler over the land of Egypt, that he might see that the corn and food were carefully laid by, so that the land of Egypt might not perish, when the time of famine came. And what Joseph said was good in the sight of Pharaoh. And he said unto his servants: "Can we find such an one as this is; a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall my servants be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thee. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, see I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck: and he made him to ride in the second chariot that he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt." Thus was Joseph taken from

a dungeon to a king's palace, with none greater than himself in all the land of Egypt, excepting the king. There was no honour so great, which was not heaped upon Joseph ; so highly had God exalted him ! See now, whether his faith and patience had been in vain ! This humble, patient Joseph, whom we saw, a little while ago, a slave in prison, was now governor of the land of Egypt. As such, he began directly to do the business which the king had put into his hands. Whilst the years of plenty lasted, he went over all the land of Egypt, laying up corn every where for the time of distress. For during these plentiful years the earth brought forth by handfuls ; and Joseph gathered corn in such quantities, that, like the sand of the sea, he could not count it. But these seven years quickly passed away ; and, then, that dreadful famine which he had spoken of began. And it was in all lands, even over all the face of the earth ; only in the land of Egypt was there bread. Then Joseph opened all the store-houses, and sold bread unto the Egyptians. And people of all countries came into Egypt to Joseph, to buy corn. Here, Edward, I am afraid we must stop for to-night : I have so much more to say about Joseph, that we had better wait for another evening.

E. I am glad you have so much more to tell me about Joseph, mamma, for I like him so much. Mamma, I know where the land of Egypt is. It is one of the northern countries of Africa. May I bring the map and shew it to you.

M. Yes, do, my dear ; it is a country that we often read about in the Bible, and of which you will hear a great deal by and bye.

E. Mamma, I do not know where the land of the Hebrews is—Joseph said he was stolen from that land.

M. The land of the Hebrews was another name for the land of Canaan, where Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob had lived. Abraham, and his children were called Hebrews, after one of his forefathers, whose name was Eber. And the land was called after them.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS IN EGYPT.

M. WELL, Edward, here is Sunday evening come again; and, if I can judge by your looks, I think you are very anxious to hear more of Joseph, whom we left, last Sunday evening selling corn to the multitudes who came into Egypt for food. I told you, that the famine spread over the whole earth; and, therefore, it was of course felt in the land of Canaan, as much as any where else. And when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent his sons there, to buy food. And ten of Joseph's brethren went down, to buy corn in Egypt. There was only one who staid behind with his father, and that was Benjamin, Joseph's youngest brother, another of Rachel's children, who was very dear to his father. After the loss of Joseph, Jacob seems to have placed the chief of his love upon Benjamin; and when he was obliged to send his other sons into Egypt, he would not let Benjamin go, for fear some

evil should happen to him. But the rest of the sons of Israel went down into Egypt, to buy corn for themselves, their children, and their aged father. As Joseph was governor over the land, he it was that sold unto all the people of the land : and his brethren came, amongst others, and bowed themselves down before him, with their faces to the earth.

E. Mamma, did they know their brother again?

M. No ; they did not know Joseph at all. Years had rolled by since they had sold him as a slave ; and Joseph, a young lad then, was now grown to be a man. But not only was his age changed, his dress, his language, his condition, all is so altered, that it is no wonder that he seems a stranger to his brethren. What is there in this rich and great man, clothed in fine raiment, living in a house like unto kings' houses, lord over all the land of Egypt, and dealing out food to the thousands who come before him ; what is there in all this to remind the sons of Israel of that unhappy brother, whom they sold as a slave to the Ishmaelite merchants ? But Joseph saw his brethren and knew them. Time had not altered them so much, it had only made them older. They were still simple shepherds, such as they were when he parted with them ; therefore he had no difficulty in knowing them to be his brothers : those cruel brothers, whom he had seen last at the frightful pit, when he asked them in vain for his life ! All that passed at that dreadful moment when his brothers had refused to pity him, when they stripped him, and left him in a pit, and then drew him out, not to shew mercy to him, but to sell him as a slave, to tear him from his country, his home, and his father,—all this

must have come back to Joseph's memory, when his brothers came unexpectedly before him to buy corn. But feelings of unkindness towards them could find no place in the mind of such a man as Joseph. True, his brothers were now in his power ; he could do with them just as he liked ; he could punish them as much as he chose, for all their cruelty to him. But such were not Joseph's wishes. He had no desire to return evil for evil. His was a temper of love, forgiveness, and kindness, not of anger and revenge. He forgot that they were his enemies. He remembered that they were his brothers. Joseph lived long, very long before our blessed Saviour had been on earth, to teach us to love our enemies, and to do good to them who hate us. But the Spirit of Christ was in Joseph's heart, even that same blessed Spirit who helps us to become good and holy, who has put every lovely temper, and every good disposition into the hearts of all the good men who have ever lived, from the holy men of old, to those who are now upon earth serving God. Yes, Edward, you read the histories of Abel, and Noah, and Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph ; and you will read of numbers more, whom you admire and love, for their faith, obedience, and holiness, for their lovely tempers and conduct. Remember, when you read of them, that all which seems to you so beautiful, is the work of the Spirit of God ;—that Spirit, who will be given to you also, if you pray to God, to send him ; who will change every naughty temper in you, and make you holy and humble, and happy. But we will go on to see how Joseph behaved to

his brothers. We find from his whole conduct, that his heart was full of forgiveness and love towards them, but he did not think it wise to tell them at once who he was. He did not know what sort of men they now were; and, though he might have longed to have discovered himself to them directly, he thought it better, whilst he was still a stranger to them, to find out all that he could about them. He wished very much to know whether they were the same cruel, wicked men, that they were when he parted from them; or whether they had repented of their sins, and become better. He did not see his brother Benjamin amongst them; which filled him with fears and doubts, and made him wish to take this opportunity of learning whether he was alive. Perhaps they had treated him, as they once treated Joseph! Then his aged father! What had become of him? Did he still live? This was hardly possible. Surely, his troubles must long ago have brought down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave! Many thoughts, sad as these, must have filled the mind of Joseph, when he saw his ten brothers stand before him. Now was the time to learn all the truth. If they had known that it was Joseph to whom they were speaking, they might have been afraid to own the truth; and Joseph would not have been able to learn the real state of things with them, with Benjamin, and with his aged father. Therefore, he made himself strange unto them, and spake very roughly to them. And he said, "Whence come ye? And they said, from the land of Canaan, to buy food." But Joseph pretended

not to believe that they were really come to buy food, and said “ye are spies : to see the nakedness of the land are ye come.”

E. What is a spy, mamma ?

M. A spy is a person sent into a country or place with some mischievous intention, to find out secretly all he can, and then to make some bad use of what he has learned.

Now the Egyptians had a great dislike to sheep-herds ; because they had, not many years before, suffered a great deal from a band of them, who came from Arabia, and, being stronger than the Egyptians, made slaves of them, and treated them with great cruelty. At the end of thirty years, however, the Egyptians got the better of the shepherds, and drove them into Palestine. These people were afterwards called Philistines. The Egyptians had not forgotten all this ; and they did not like any shepherds at all ; and they could not bear to eat bread with the Hebrews, because they were a people of shepherds, and came from Palestine.

E. What did Joseph mean, when he said his brothers came to see the nakedness of the land ?

M. He meant that they were come to look about them, and to see what part of Egypt was the least protected from the attacks of enemies. And it so happened, that that part of Egypt, which lay next to Canaan, was the side by which it was most easy to enter it. On all the other sides, it was defended by large deserts and shallow seas.

E. And that was the very side from which Joseph's brothers must have come, mamma.

M. Yes, it was ; and therefore Joseph might

easily pretend that he thought them spies. We soon see the wisdom of charging them thus; for his brothers were so surprised at being accused of such a crime, that he learnt immediately from them what he most wished to know. For their answer was; "Nay, my lord, to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men; thy servants are no spies. Thy servants are twelve brethren; the sons of one man, in the land of Canaan: and behold, the youngest is this day with our father; and one is not."

E. Did they mean Joseph then?

M. Yes, they did; but Joseph pretended still not to believe them, and to think them spies. And he told them that, if they wished to prove to him that they were speaking truth, one of them must go and fetch their youngest brother, whilst the rest of them staid behind in Egypt. Then he put them all into prison for three days.

E. Was not that very unkind, mamma? I thought you said Joseph would not return evil for evil.

M. Yes, so I did; and I do not think Joseph did this from any unkind feeling towards his brothers; but, by making them taste for three days only, what he had suffered in that very prison for three years, he wished to bring them to a sense of their sins. Whilst they were in misery themselves, they would be likely to look back upon their past lives, and to think, perhaps, with shame and sorrow, of their own cruel conduct to Joseph, which they might never have thought of before, too busy most likely, or too free from trouble, to have thought often or much of their wickedness.

E. Did Joseph keep them in prison only three days?

M. On the third day he went to them, and said : “ This do and live ; for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison ; and go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses : but bring your youngest brother unto me ; so shall your words be verified, (or proved true,) and ye shall not die.” And they did so. And whilst Joseph stood by, and they were preparing to go, he heard them say to one another in the Hebrew language, which they thought he could not understand, “ We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them saying, spake I not unto you saying, do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear ? therefore behold also his blood is required.” Thus Joseph saw, that, by putting them into prison, and dealing with them as he had done, he had already brought them to some sense of their sin : he saw their misery, and, instead of rejoicing in it, he pitied them, and turned himself about from them and wept. But still, though he felt for them, he determined to keep one, and to send the others to bring Benjamin : for he was not sure yet, what was become of him ; and he loved him so much, that he could not rest until he had learnt all the truth about him. Therefore he would not let them see his grief, but turned away from them to weep. And when he had dried his tears he went back to them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

E. Why did he choose Simeon, mamma ?

M. He seems to have been one of the worst of them all. Reuben, the eldest, had done all he could to save Joseph from the hands of his brothers ; Judah, the second, had felt some pity for him ; but Simeon was the eldest of those who had wished to murder him ; and it was therefore right, that, if any one were to suffer more than the rest, that one should be Simeon. Then the rest of the brothers set off, to return to the land of Canaan. And Joseph had all their sacks filled with corn, and gave also food for their journey. And, unknown to his brothers, he had all the money, which they brought to buy corn, put back into their sacks again ; he would not take it from them. And when they opened their sacks upon the way, to get food for their asses, great was their surprise, when they saw their money there also. They could not tell what to think of it ; their hearts failed them, and they were afraid ; saying one to another, “ What is this that God hath done unto us ? ”

E. I do not see why they were so frightened at that, mamma.

M. I suppose, my love, it was their guilty consciences, that is, the recollection of their wickedness, that made them feel afraid of every thing. They had acted so deceitfully themselves, that they were afraid of being deceived by others. And thus, when Joseph only meant to be kind to them, he filled their hearts with terror. Guilty consciences are easily frightened.

E. Did they get back safely to their father, mamma ?

M. Yes ; they came again to their father in the land of Canaan. But I cannot tell you, this evening, any thing that passed between them and Jacob,

because it is growing late. You must think a great deal before you come to me again of all that you have heard to-night; and remember there is much in Joseph's character, which even young children may try to copy. You have heard already of his obedience to his father, of his faithful and diligent conduct in the house of his master Potiphar, of his patience in prison, and of some of his kindness to his brothers. Think of these things; and may God give you grace, my dear child, to follow the example of this holy man.

TWELFTH SUNDAY EVENING.

JOSEPH MADE KNOWN TO HIS BROTHERS.

E. DID Joseph's brothers tell Jacob all that had happened to them in Egypt, mamma?

M. Yes; they seem to have told him every thing, and, amongst the rest, the sad news that he must part with Benjamin. And when he heard that Simeon had been left behind in prison, and that the governor of Egypt desired them to bring down Benjamin, Jacob their father said unto them: "Me ye have bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye would take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." The aged man was worn down with many sorrows; and, at the thought of losing Benjamin, he forgot, for a moment, how often the gracious providence of God had been over him for good, changing sorrow into joy, bringing good out of evil. By providence I mean the care of

God. To trust in providence, is to put our trust in God, or in the gracious care of God. When Jacob said, "all these things are against me," he forgot, I think, for a moment, that nothing happens to us without God's permission, and that we must patiently bear his holy will at all times. He little thought what care God was taking for his happiness at that very moment ; he little thought, when he was asked to part with Benjamin for a short time, that he was not only to have Benjamin again, but Joseph also. Reuben wished his father to give Benjamin into his care, promising to bring him back to him again. But Jacob said : " My son shall not go down with you ; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone ; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Now the famine still continued very grievous in the land ; and the family of Israel had soon eaten up all the corn they had brought out of Egypt. And when they began to be distressed for food, " their father said unto them, go again, buy us a little food."

E. But, mamma, they could not go to Joseph again without Benjamin ?

M. No, my love, " and Judah spake unto his father, saying, the man did solemnly protest unto me, ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother down, we will go and buy thee food ; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down ; for the man said unto me, ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. And Judah said unto Israel, his father, send the lad with me, that we may arise and go,

that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, and our little ones. I will be surety for him, (that is, I will be answerable for his safety;) of my hand shalt thou require him ; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." And when their father Israel found, that either they must all perish for hunger, or that Benjamin must go, he said unto them : " If it must be so, now do this : take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds ; and take double money in your hand, and the money that was brought again in your sacks ; take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man : and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." By which I think Jacob meant, that he would leave in the hands of God, and was willing that it should be now as should seem best to him.

E. Oh ! then, mamma, he did not forget now to trust in God ?

M. No, he did not ; good men never long forget to do this. Jacob places all his hope now in the mercy of God. And the men did as their father had told them, and rose up, and went down into Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

E. Joseph must have thought, that they were never coming back again, mamma.

M. Yes, when he found that they staid so long in the land of Canaan, he must have began to think, that he had not doubted their word without reason, and

that they must have deceived him about Benjamin. But at length all his anxious fears and doubts were happily ended. Benjamin stands before him; the son of his mother Rachel. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of the house, "Slay and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon." And the men were afraid, when they were brought into Joseph's house; and they thought of the money which they had found in their sacks, and were frightened, lest Joseph should think they had stolen it, and punish them for it. We cannot wonder that men who had shewn no mercy to others, should expect none themselves. And they went to the steward of Joseph's house, to try to explain the matter to him. And he said: "Peace be to you; fear not; your God and the God of your fathers have given you the treasure in your sacks; I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them." Then he took them to Joseph's house, and gave them water to wash their feet, and food for their asses. And they got their present ready for Joseph, by the time he should come home at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there. When Joseph came home, they brought him the present, and bowed themselves to him with their faces to the earth. You remember the dream that Joseph once had, which made his brothers hate him: see how it was brought to pass; for here, for the second time, all his brothers bow down before him. "And he asked them of their welfare; and said, is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?" Now Joseph was only anxious about his aged father: he was still uncertain, whether he really

lived, and must have felt a thousand fears, lest, by taking away Benjamin from him, though only for a time, he might have been the means of bringing death more quickly upon him. But his brothers answered him : “Thy servant, our father, is in good health ; he is yet alive ; and they bowed down their heads and made obeisance. And Joseph lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me ? And he turned to Benjamin and said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.” And when he had said this, his love for his brother burst forth. He could not hide his feelings ; his heart was too full ; and he was obliged to leave his brothers, that he might weep alone : “he entered into his chamber, and wept there.” Then he washed his face, and went out, and hid his tears as well as he could, for he did not wish his brothers to know him yet ; “and he said, set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for his brothers by themselves, and for the Egyptians by themselves, because the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews.” And he sent messes to all his brothers, one after the other, according to their ages, beginning with the eldest. And Benjamin’s mess was five times larger than any of the others. Still Joseph was determined to try his brothers yet more : now that he found that Benjamin was really alive, he was better satisfied with them, than he was before ; but there was a good deal to make him uneasy still. He was not quite sure that his father was really alive ; he did not know how his brothers felt towards Benjamin ; whether in their hearts they hated him, as they had

once hated Joseph. In short, he wanted to see more clearly, whether they were better men than they were when he last knew them; and in order to learn this, he determined to put them to one trial more.

E. How did he do that, mamma?

M. I will tell you. After they had dined with him, he gave them leave to go back to the land of Canaan, with plenty of food in their sacks, as much as they could carry. He had their money also put back into their sacks again. Besides this, he told the steward of his house to have his own silver cup, out of which he drank, put into the sack which belonged to Benjamin; which was done unknown to any of his brothers. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. But they had not got far from the city, before Joseph told his steward to follow after them, to charge them with having stolen the silver cup, and to ask them why they had made an evil return to him, for all the kindness he had shewn to them. Then were their hearts filled with fear: they assured the steward that they had not taken the cup, saying: "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do this thing: behold the money, which we found in our sacks, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it shall be found, both let him die, and we will also be my lord's bonds-men." Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground. And the steward searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. What

was their wonder, and their grief ! They had felt quite sure, till now, that none of them had taken the cup ; but when they see it in Benjamin's sack, they know not what to think, but suppose that he must have been guilty of this crime. Then they rent their clothes, and returned every man into the city. "And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, and fell down before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, what is this deed that ye have done ? And Judah said : What shall we say unto my lord ? what shall we speak ? or how shall we clear ourselves ? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." This he said, thinking that Benjamin must really have taken the cup. And he said, "Behold we are my lord's servants ; both we and he with whom it is found. And Joseph said, God forbid that I should do so ; the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant ; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father. Then Judah came near unto him, and said, O, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant ; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, have you a father, or a brother ? And we said unto my lord, we have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one ; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, the lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servant, ex-

cept your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, go again, buy us a little food. And we said, we cannot go down; if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant, my father, said unto us, ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me; and I said, surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad, unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondsman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest, peradventure, I see the evil that shall come on my father." So beautifully did Judah plead for Benjamin! So deeply did he feel for the misery that the loss of Benjamin would cost his aged father!.. And now Joseph saw clearly that his brothers were quite altered men; that they would sooner

suffer any thing themselves, than harm Benjamin, or grieve their father. Thus, too, he learnt that Jacob was still alive ; for if they had not spoken the truth about it, if Jacob had indeed been laid in his quiet grave, then his sons would not have been ready to suffer so much for the sake of saving him from sorrow. This was enough for Joseph. His wish was, not to make his brothers unhappy for nothing, but to bring them to a sense of their sins, and to learn from them the whole truth. Therefore, when he heard Judah speak in so dutiful a manner of his father, and in so tender a manner of Benjamin, his heart melted within him ; and he could no longer keep from making himself known to his brethren. He could no longer hide his tears, but wept aloud ; so that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard him. " And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live ? And his brethren could not answer him ; for they were troubled at his presence." And when he saw their distress, he pitied them ; for he knew that their thoughts must be gone back to the time, when they had sought to kill him, and that they must now feel sadly afraid of his just anger against them. And he said to his brothers : " Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither ; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land ; and God sent me before you, to save your life by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.

and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord over all his house, and a ruler through all the land of Egypt." What can be more beautiful than the conduct of Joseph to his brothers ! What more delightful than to see him, not only forgiving them all their cruelty towards him, but comforting them in their affliction, making even excuses for them, and looking upon all that had happened, as brought about by the hand of God ! " It was not you that brought me hither, but God :" it is not Pharaoh that hath made me now rich and great, but God. Oh ! that we had all of us tempers like Joseph's ! Oh ! that we could forgive as Joseph forgave ! even finding excuses for those who have ill-treated us. Oh ! that we could suffer, as he had suffered ! that we could trust in God, and look up to God, as Joseph did, at all times !

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

M. We are now come to a very happy part of Joseph's history ; I mean the time when he and his aged father were to meet again.

E. Ah ! mamma. Then Jacob did see Joseph again before he died ? I think you told me once, that he was to find him again ; but I had forgotten it. How glad I am ! do tell me all about it, mamma.

M. Joseph could not wait long, after he had made himself known to his brothers, without seeing his

aged father. And he said to his brothers : " Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph: God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me; tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen ; thou shalt be near unto me ; thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast ; and there will I nourish thee ; for yet there are five years of famine ; lest thou and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen : and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And when Joseph had spoken these words, he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept ; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brothers, and wept upon them ; and after that his brethren talked with him. And king Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers were come, and it pleased Pharaoh." And the king desired Joseph to send up waggons to bring his father and all his family down into Egypt: and he said, that he need not care for any thing that he left behind, for that the good of all the land of Egypt should be his. And Joseph gave them waggons, according to the king's command, and food also for the way. To each of them, he likewise gave changes of raiment ; but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt ; and ten asses laden with corn and bread, and meat for his father by the way.

And Joseph sent them away, and they went up out of the land of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father.

E. Oh ! mamma, what did Jacob say, when he heard the good news they had to tell him ?

M. The Bible tells us, that when they told him, saying, " Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt ; that Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." They had deceived their parent before ; how could he believe them now ? Besides, the words they told him were almost too happy to be true. Then his sons told him all that Joseph had said unto them : " and when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived. And Israel said, it is enough ; Joseph, my son, is yet alive ; I will go and see him before I die !" Long, very long, had it been, since the aged Israel had known any joy like that which he now felt. All he most wished for in this world is granted him ; nor does he desire any thing more : let him but see Joseph, and he will die in peace. Were he to live much longer, sorrow, in some shape or other, would visit him again. He longs to go to that world, where sorrow can never come.

E. Did Jacob set off directly to go to Joseph ?

M. Yes ; he took his journey with all that he had, and came first to Beersheba, where his father and mother had lived. And there he offered sacrifices unto the God of Israel ; sacrifices offered not in sorrow, as they had often been before, but in joy and thankfulness ; sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to the God of Israel ; that God who had never left

him; who had borne him through many long years of sorrow, and had at length turned all his mourning into joy. Joseph, his son, was yet alive; and he was going down to see him, before he died. Besides, the pious Jacob did not like to take upon him so serious a journey, without beginning it with God, without first earnestly seeking God's blessing upon it. Nor were his praises and prayers offered up in vain. We read, that, "at Beersheba, God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob; and he said, here I am. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again. And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes;" that is, Joseph should close his eyes, or be with him, in the hour of death. What comfort for Jacob! He had, perhaps, felt afraid of going down into Egypt, amongst a strange people, who knew not God, and did not like the Hebrews: but now God tells him not to fear; because he will go down there with him. "And Jacob rose up from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the waggons which Pharaoh had sent to bring him. And they took their cattle, and the goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt." And Judah went before his father to tell Joseph of his coming, and they came into the land of Goshen. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel, his father, in Goshen, and presented himself

unto him : and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a long time. Oh ! what a blessed meeting ! Happy parent, and happy child ! And as soon as he could speak, Jacob said unto Joseph : " Now let me die, since I have seen thy face ; because thou art yet alive." And Joseph was anxious that his father and brethren should be allowed to live in the land of Goshen ; because they were shepherds, and shepherds were much disliked by the Egyptians. " Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, are come out of the land of Canaan ; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took five of his brethren, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And the king said unto his brethren, what is your occupation ? And they said, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers ; for to sojourn in the land are we come : for thy servants have no pastures for their flocks ; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan : now, therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, thy father, and thy brethren are come unto thee ; the land of Egypt is before thee : in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell : in the land of Goshen let them dwell ; and if thou knowest any men of activity amongst them, make them rulers over my cattle. Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, how old art thou ? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years : few and evil have

the days of my life been, and have not attained unto the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage."

E. What does pilgrimage mean, mamma?

M. A pilgrim, my love, is a person who moves continually from place to place; who wanders about, without any settled home. A pilgrimage means a journey. Jacob might well call his life a pilgrimage; for it had been a continued journey. He had been tossed about from place to place, ever since he first left his father's house in Beersheba. You can remember him at Padanaram, and then in several parts of the land of Canaan; and now he is come into Egypt. So it had been also with Abraham and Isaac before him: for these faithful servants of God, who were so highly favoured by him, had no fixed home here on earth. God had provided better things for them; a better country, that is, an heavenly one, to which they were continually looking; and for the sake of which they were content to wander here below. But, Edward, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy men of old, are not the only persons who may be called pilgrims. All good men that ever lived, have looked upon themselves as such; that is, they have remembered that this world was not to be their home for ever; that they were only on a journey through it, to a better,—passers on through a world of sin and sorrow to heaven, their *true home*.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE DEATH OF JACOB AND OF JOSEPH.

E. DID Jacob live a long time after he came into Egypt, mamma?

M. He lived in Egypt seventeen years; and then the time drew near that he must die. "And it came to pass that one told Joseph, behold thy father is sick!" And Joseph went immediately to see his father, and took with him his own two sons Manasseh and Ephraim: for Joseph was anxious to get his father's blessing for them, as well as for himself, before he died. "And one told Jacob, and said, Behold thy son Joseph cometh unto thee; and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, who are these? And Joseph said, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place: And he said, Bring them I pray thee unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him: and he kissed and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face, and lo, God hath shewed me thy children: and he blessed them and said, God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them,

and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac. So he blessed them." And Jacob called all his sons together round his death-bed, and told them many things that should happen in days to come. His address to his sons was very beautiful, and one that you will, I am sure, read one day in the Bible with great delight. And Jacob blessed all his sons ; but the blessings, which he gave to each, were very different one from the other. I cannot now explain each of them separately to you ; but I must just tell you, that Israel blessed Joseph exceedingly abundantly. Of the blessings, however, which he gave unto his sons, that of Judah was the greatest. For of Judah, Jacob said, Shiloh should come ; which is one of the names given to our Blessed Redeemer ; by which he meant, that our Saviour should be born amongst that tribe, or people, of whom Judah was the head. And when Jacob had made an end of talking to his sons and blessing them, his eyes were closed in death ; but not till he had declared with his lips his readiness to die. Some of the last words he spoke were, " I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord !" Death gave him no alarm ; it did not come upon him unexpectedly, or suddenly : he had been waiting for it ; and even more than that, he had been almost impatiently expecting it. He does not even call his departure from this life *death*, but *salvation*. He does not say I wait for death ; but " I wait for thy salvation, O Lord !" I think you know that salvation means *deliverance*. It is a word generally used in speaking of our souls ; and means the deliverance or saving of our souls from sin here, and from the punishment of sin hereafter. You know, too, that

we owe our salvation, or the saving of our souls, to our Lord Christ, who died to deliver or save sinners from the guilt and punishment of sin. But to return to the death-bed of Jacob. What does he mean by saying, " I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord !" He had looked anxiously for the moment, when his salvation, which had been begun here, should be made quite perfect in heaven ; when he should be delivered entirely from sin, so as never to do wrong any more ; when he should be delivered from a world full of sorrow and change, to go to one where tears are wiped from off all faces ; where age, and pain, and weariness, and sickness, and death can never come. Happy Jacob ! so ready, so anxious to die.

When Joseph saw that his father was dead, he fell upon his neck, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph had his father's body carried up out of Egypt, as Jacob had begged him to do ; and he buried him in the land of Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham had buried Sarah ; and where Abraham, and Isaac, and Rebekah had also all been buried. And Joseph went back into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him, to bury his father.

And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they were afraid that Joseph would change his conduct towards them, and begin to punish them for their cruelty to him. " They said, Joseph will, peradventure, hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say

unto Joseph : Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brothers, and their sin ; for they did unto thee evil : and now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy fathers." But they knew little of Joseph's heart, when they sent him this message ; for he wept when they spake unto him. And Joseph said unto his brothers, " Fear not ; am I in the place of God ?" Does not punishment belong to God ? Shall I then take it on myself ? " As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not ; I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." And they all dwelt in Egypt ; and Joseph lived to be an hundred and ten years old ; and then he said unto his brethren, " I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he gave unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob." Then Joseph charged his brothers to bury him in the land of Canaan.

E. And did they do so, mamma ?

M. Yes ; when they returned to the land of Canaan, they took up his bones with them.

E. After Joseph's death, did his brothers stay in Egypt ?

M. Yes ; they dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen, and they had possessions there, and grew, and soon became many in number.

E. Was Goshen a part of the land of Egypt, mamma ?

M. Yes ; it was a part of Lower Egypt, which was a particularly rich country, lying next to Arabia

and Palestine, full of fair pastures, and watered by many streams from the river Nile. Very glad, therefore, were the sons of Jacob to move their flocks from the land of Canaan, where the grass was all burnt up, to the green pastures of Goshen ; for Canaan was much higher than Goshen ; therefore the grass dried up much more quickly there.

And now would you like me to give you an account of Egypt, that country where the children of Israel lived so long, and which we so often read of in the Bible ?

E. Oh ! yes, mamma ; I should like to hear every thing you can tell me about Egypt.

M. You know already, my love, that it is one of the northern countries of Africa. Fetch your map and look at it. Now you will see that it has the Mediterranean sea on the north, Abyssinia on the south, the Red Sea on the east, and one of the deserts of Africa, called the desert of Barca, to the west. It is divided into Upper and Lower Egypt ; and its chief towns are Cairo and Alexandria. It is a long valley ; the famous river called the Nile runs through it ; it is closed in by mountains, and has immense sandy deserts beyond them on both sides of it. Egypt is an exceedingly hot country, and is famous for pomegranates, figs, olives, dates, grapes, melons, and many other fruits. The graceful palm tree also grows in Egypt in great beauty ; and there is a very curious plant there, called the papyrus, from which paper was once made. The hippopotamus, the hyæna, the camel, the antelope, and the ichneumon, are all to be found in Egypt, besides the terrible crocodile, which is often seen on

the banks of the river Nile. Eagles also are common in Egypt. Very little rain falls in this country ; but the want of it is made up by the Nile, a very extraordinary river, which runs over its banks every year, and waters the whole country, so that nothing can be seen but the tops of trees. After this every thing grows delightfully, with very little trouble to the labourer. This very extraordinary overflowing of the Nile is supposed to be caused by the falling of great rains in the mountains of Abyssinia, where it rises, and which lie to the south of Egypt. A very beautiful kind of water lily, called the lotus, grows very abundantly in the river Nile. It is said that Joseph is still remembered in Egypt ; and that large granaries are shown there, where he is supposed to have laid up corn in the time of famine, and which are still called by his name. Such, Edward, was the country in which the children of Israel lived so long ! By the children of Israel, I do not mean only Joseph and his brethren, for they died, and all that generation ; but I mean their children, and their children's children for many years. There they lived, and there they became very many in number, and exceeding mighty : and the land was filled with them. But we must not suppose that they were always happy and comfortable in Egypt, as they were in the time of Joseph, and of that king Pharaoh who valued him so much. In a few years after Joseph's death, things became very different. There were new kings over the land of Egypt, who knew nothing of Joseph ; and, amongst others, one called also Pharaoh, who did not like the children of Israel at all, and treated them very unkindly.

This king made slaves of them, and put taskmasters over them, who afflicted them very much, making their lives bitter to them with hard and difficult works, which, with all their diligence, they could not get done. Amongst many other things, the children of Israel built two cities for Pharaoh, called Pithon and Raamses, besides some very curious buildings called pyramids. Still the harder they worked, the more were they ill used: but God was with them; and the more they were afflicted by the Egyptians, the more they multiplied and grew.

Here, Edward, I must stop. Next Sunday I shall have a very interesting story to tell you.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF MOSES.

E. ARE you going on to-night, mamma, with your account of the children of Israel?

M. Yes, Edward, I am; and whilst I do this, I shall also have to give you a part of the history of Moses; as interesting a story, I think, as any I have told you yet.

E. There is a very pretty picture, mamma, in the Family Bible, of Moses in the bulrushes.

M. Yes, my dear; and we will have that by us whilst I give you an explanation of it. You heard last Sunday evening, that the blessing of God was with the children of Israel, so that after all king Pharaoh could do, the Hebrew people still grew in

number, and were becoming a great people. When the king found this, he ordered that all their infant sons should be put to death : and he charged his people, saying, " Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive."

E. Oh ! mamma, what a cruel king he must have been, to make them drown the poor little babies !

M. Yes, my love, he must have been cruel indeed, when he gave such a command as this. Oh ! what sad news for every Hebrew mother ! What must each in her turn have felt, when she gave up her infant to a dreadful death. Oh ! wretched Israel ! Miserable indeed must they have been now. Scarcely a house among them, which was not full of sorrow ; hardly one, where some mother was not weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not. At this time a little child was born, of whom we shall hear a great deal by and bye. The name of his father was Amram ; of his mother, Jochebed : they were both of the tribe of Levi. And when Jochebed saw that her infant son was a goodly child, she could not find it in her heart to part with him, and she hid him three months. Three anxious, dangerous months, must they have been to this fond mother. How she must have trembled at every step she heard ! how every approaching sound must have filled her heart with terror, fearing every day that her treasure would be found, and taken from her ! During three months she had time to think of a thousand ways of saving her child's life, and as we have reason to believe, from the faith and hope that she showed in God, that she was a good woman, we can have no doubt that

she offered up many, many prayers, and entreated the blessing and help of the God of Israel in her endeavours to save her child. At length, when she could no longer hide him, she made for him with her own hands, a little ark or cradle of bulrushes, which she daubed with slime and pitch to keep out the water; and having put the child into it, she laid it in the flags by the edge of the river Nile, probably that it might be hidden there without being carried away by the stream, and that she might be able to come again and feed it. The bulrushes here spoken of were flags of the papyrus; of which the Egyptians made their paper, and also their boats, and which grew very much on the banks of the Nile. This papyrus, when smeared over with pitch, was strong enough to keep out the water, yet light enough to float upon it. The river Nile was always covered with these vessels of bulrushes, and it is supposed that the ark in which Jochebed placed her child was made like them in shape, so as not to be noticed as something strange. It is most likely too, that she put him into the ark of bulrushes, instead of throwing him at once into the river, in the humble hope that the God of Israel would, in some way or other, preserve his life.

E. Mamma, I wonder she was not afraid, when she left him on the banks of the Nile, that some fierce crocodile should get him?

M. I dare say she had a thousand fears for him; but she did the best she could, and left the rest to God. Having placed the helpless infant among the flags, she left his sister at a little distance from the spot, to watch the little cradle, and see what would

become of it. I have no doubt that Jochebed thought that her infant must perish sooner or later in the waters. But there was an eye over that little vessel far more watchful than that of the most tender mother; even the eye of God, which seeth every where. This we see very clearly: for a short time after Jochebed had left her child, the daughter of king Pharaoh came down to bathe herself in the river, and her maidens walked along by the river side. And when the princess saw the little ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children. And the sister of the child, who had seen all that had passed, came to the princess and said to her, "shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "go," and she went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto the mother, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. Surely never did nurse so gladly take her charge! Happy Jochebed! with what feelings must she have taken the child to her heart and her home again! Let us see here the wonderful hand of God! Jochebed no doubt saw and blessed it. And let us observe it too,—that we may learn to trust in God with our whole heart. And we read that the child grew under the tender care of the mother, and that she took him when he was old enough, unto Pharaoh's daughter, who brought him up as her own son.

And she called his name Moses, which, in the Egyptian language, means one saved or drawn out of the water; because she had taken him from the edge of the river. This was that very Moses, Edward, who became, afterwards, the great prophet and leader of Israel. I think you know already that a prophet is a person, or messenger, sent from God, to instruct and teach people in his will, and to tell them things to come. As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was educated in a princely manner, and was well taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. But though brought up in king Pharaoh's court, and from his childhood used to all the magnificence of a king's palace, yet Moses did not forget his own people, or his father's house.

E. Do you think he often went to see his mother, mamma?

M. Yes; I think there is no doubt that he did so; and that whilst Pharaoh's daughter had him taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, his mother took care to instruct him in the knowledge of the God of Israel, and of that Redeemer of whom Jacob on his death-bed had spoken, and whom Adam, and Abraham, and Isaac had all been taught to look for. In his visits to his own people, Moses saw and pitied the miseries which they had to bear from the cruelty of king Pharaoh. He saw their sufferings, and could no longer be happy in the court of Egypt, amongst the enemies of his people and of their religion. The Israelites were the people of God: all the rest of the world at that time were strangers to God. Moses was an Israelite, and, like all true Israelites, believed in a Saviour to come. We have

seen what great things the faith of Abraham and Isaac, of Jacob and Joseph, enabled them to do ; and we now see how, by faith, Moses was able to leave the court of Pharaoh, to turn away from all its riches and pleasures ; to refuse to be called any longer the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; and to be willing to suffer instead any affliction amongst the people of God. His faith made him more proud of the name of Israelite, than he had ever been of being called after king Pharaoh's daughter. He was sure that in God's service he should gain, even in this world, far more than he had left behind ; and that, in the next world, his reward would be everlasting life. Such was the faith of Moses ; and therefore he thought very little of all that he left, and gladly joined himself to the suffering Hebrews. Once more amongst his own people, he found it very difficult to see with patience all that they had to bear ; and on one occasion we read that he saved a Hebrew from the hand of an Egyptian, who was smiting him, and slew the Egyptian. When king Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. And Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian.

E. Where is the land of Midian, mamma ?

M. It is a part of Arabia Petrea, where some of Abraham's family had settled. The road to it lay through a desert, and it was about eight days' journey from Egypt. Now the priest of Midian, whose name was Jethro, had several daughters ; and they came and drew water at a well near which Moses happened to be resting, and filled the troughs to water their father's flocks. And some shepherds

came and drove them away ; but Moses stood up and helped them. And when they went home, they told their father, that an Egyptian had helped them : for so they thought Moses. And he said unto his daughters, " Why is it that ye have left the man ? call him, that he may eat bread." And Moses lived several years with Jethro ; and he gave him one of his daughters for his wife. Here, my love, we must leave the history of Moses for to-night. Before we meet again, try and think over all that I have told you about him ; and then we will go on with his history.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

MOSES SENT TO PHARAOH.

M. HAVE you thought over, as I told you, Edward, all that you have heard of Moses, from the time his mother laid him in the river Nile, till he went to live in Midian ?

E. Yes, mamma, I have tried to remember it all ; and now I should like to hear something more about him.

M. Whilst Moses was dwelling in the land of Midian, it came to pass, that the king of Egypt died, and that there was another king called also Pharaoh. But the children of Israel were not at all the better for this ; they still sighed under hard and cruel bondage, and " they cried, and their cry came up unto God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, and

with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel; and God had respect unto them :" that is, the Almighty saw their misery, he looked down upon them, and pitied them, and took notice of their sad condition. Happy was it for the Israelites, that they had God for their friend ! Happy was it for them, that he heard their cry, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ! Happy was it for them, that they were the people of God : for he is both willing and able to help those who trust in him. Do you understand the meaning of the word *Covenant* ?

E. No, mamma ; I did not at all understand it.

M. When it is said in the Bible, that God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it means, that God remembered the solemn promise, he had made to them, of blessing them and their children after them, and of giving them the land of Canaan. Four hundred years had passed since this promise had been made ; but time and years are nothing with God. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years seem to him as one day. The promise had not been forgotten, although it had pleased God that the children of Israel should suffer many things first in Egypt. Perhaps, whilst living amongst people who worshipped idols, they had been led to follow their bad example, and had forgotten the God of their fathers : and their sufferings might have been permitted by God, as a punishment for their sins, and to bring them back to him. Or these sorrows might have been meant to be the means of keeping the people of God quite separate from those who

knew him not, and of making them more willing and ready to leave the land of Egypt, when God should wish them to do so. At any rate, their sufferings in Egypt would make them more anxious to get to the land of Canaan. We see here, how mindful God is of his word, and that whatever he has promised he will be sure to give. If he has promised heaven to us, he will most certainly give it us, if we only try to get there ; and if we do but get there at last, all that we have suffered on earth, will only make heaven more sweet and pleasant to us. Egypt is like the world, full of toil and trial : and these things are meant to make us more anxious to get to heaven—as the Israelites were to leave Egypt and get to Canaan.

And now the time was come, when it pleased God to save his people from the cruelties of Egypt, and he saw fit to choose his servant Moses, to be his messenger to them, and to Pharaoh, and their leader and guide, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. Moses was still in Midian, where he had fled from the face of Pharaoh ; and he kept the flock of Jethro, the priest of Midian. And one day, when he was feeding the flock, “ he led it to the back of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.” Horeb was a great mountain, of which you will hear much more by and by. I shall now only tell you, that it was on one of the lower parts of Horeb that Moses fed his flock ; for this part of it was covered with fruitful pastures, which were well shaded from the sun. “ And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush ; and he looked, and behold ! the

bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed," or burnt up. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." Now we find, that the angel who appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, was none other than our Lord Jesus Christ himself. The word angel means Messenger, and the name of angel of the Lord is often given to our Saviour in the Bible, because he came into the world as a *messenger* from God to man. And the Bible goes on to say, that "when the Lord saw that Moses turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said Moses, Moses; and he said, here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither; put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground;"—made holy, Edward, by the presence of God. "Moreover, he said, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." These verses teach us, that our Lord Jesus Christ is God as well as man. You see he is first spoken of as the angel of the Lord; which is one of our blessed Saviour's names: then he is called the Lord, and then God; and immediately afterwards he speaks of himself to Moses, and says, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Now when Moses heard these words, he "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said unto him, I have surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out

of that land, into a land flowing with milk and honey." This land was the land of Canaan, and is often called in Scripture, a land flowing with milk and honey, because it is very fruitful and well watered, full of fair pastures and flowers, where there might be plenty of flocks to give milk, and the bees might fill their cells with honey. The goats of this country are said to have given a greater quantity of milk, than in any other part of the world; and honey seems always to have been very common in Palestine; so that, even to this day, there is a great plenty there. " And the Lord said unto Moses, Come now, therefore, I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses was full of fear, when he heard what God wished him to do; partly, perhaps, because he thought the work very difficult, and felt himself greatly unfit for it. But it pleased God to comfort him, by assuring him that he would be with him, to guide and to protect him,—saying " certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token (or sign) unto thee, that I have sent thee, (or by this thou shalt know that I have sent thee,) that when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." You remember, that the mountain, from which God was then speaking to Moses, was mount Horeb; it is also called Sinai: indeed Horeb and Sinai seem to have been two tops of the same mountain. We will look at it presently on the map, when we shall see that it did not lie at all in the way of the Israelites, in passing from Egypt to Canaan, the road from

Egypt being in a very different direction. Therefore; if they should afterwards come to this mountain, then Moses would most certainly know and feel, that he had really been sent by God to bring his people out of Egypt. Then Moses asked God by what name he should speak of him to the children of Israel; which looks as if Moses knew very well that they had forgotten the Lord God of their fathers. " And God said unto Moses, *I AM THAT I AM.* Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel; *I am,* hath sent me unto you." It pleased God thus to make himself known to the children of Israel by the name of *I am*; as if he would say, I am the Lord, or *Jehovah* (which is one of the great names given to God) am constantly and for ever the same—I know no change—I am from everlasting—I, *Jehovah* know no beginning and no end. Though my people may have forsaken and forgotten me,—*I am that I am*;—the same that I have ever been, and ever shall be. Before the mountains and the world were made, I am God, from everlasting, and world without end. The idols which my people are worshiping, are nothing but wood and stone; or they are dumb animals which a little while ago were not, and will soon again not be; but I am he, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the only living God. " And God said, moreover, unto Moses, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel; the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations:"—which means, by this name will I be known and remembered for ever.

And God told Moses that he was to tell the children of Israel, that the Lord had seen their sorrows, and would deliver them from Egypt, and lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey. And God told Moses, that he knew Pharaoh would not let them go at first, but that he would work such wonders in Egypt, as should fill Pharaoh's heart with fear, and oblige him to let them go. Moses heard all that the Lord had said unto him ; but he was still full of fears and doubts. And the Lord did several wonderful things before Moses, which none but God could have done. For instance, God told Moses to cast the rod, or shepherd's staff, which he had in his hand, upon the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from the face of it. Then the Lord told him to take the serpent up by the tail, and it became a rod again in his hand. Then the Lord said unto him, " Put now thy hand into thy bosom, and he put his hand into his bosom : and when he took it out, his hand was like the hand of a leper, white as snow. And the Lord said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again, and he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out behold it was like the other again." Now these wonders God did to convince Moses that it was the Lord who was speaking unto him, and that it was the Lord that sent him unto Pharaoh ; and he told him, that, in order that Pharaoh and the children of Israel might believe that he was really the messenger of God, he would give him the power of working such miracles as these before them, and many more, by which they should see clearly, that God was with him.

E. What does a leper mean, mamma ?

M. A leper is a person afflicted with a very dreadful kind of sickness, which makes his whole body as white as snow.

E. And now, mamma, I want to know what a miracle is.

M. A miracle is something that can only be done by the power of God. Moses was to do before Pharaoh many wonderful things, such as none could do, excepting God gave him the power; and by these miracles he was to convince the people that he came from God. But Moses was still unwilling and afraid to go; because he was slow of speech, that is, because he could not speak well; because he had not the power of expressing himself as well as many others. And the Lord said unto his unwilling servant: "Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." With such gracious promises of help from God, surely Moses must have lost all his fears! Surely he could be afraid no more! No, it was not so. Moses entreated God to send a more proper person, one fitter for the employment than he was. Then the Lord was displeased with Moses for his want of faith; but he graciously heard his prayer, and allowed his brother Aaron, who could speak well, to go with him, and to speak for him to the people. And God told him, that his brother was coming to meet him, and that when he saw him, he should be glad in his heart. Then Moses went to Jethro his father-in-law, and took his family, and returned into the land of Egypt; and Aaron his

brother came out to meet him, as the Lord had said. But there will not be time to-night, to tell you all that happened to Moses, when he got back into Egypt: Bring the map, and just let us look for a moment at the mountain, where God appeared in so wonderful a manner to Moses, and at the land of Midian, where he had lived so long.



SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

E. DID Moses go to King Pharaoh directly, with God's message, mamma?

M. We read, Edward, that Moses and Aaron went as the Lord commanded them, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and told the people all that the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did wonders before them. "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads, and worshipped." After this, Moses and Aaron went to King Pharaoh, and told him saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. But Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah; neither will I let Israel go." And, from that day, Pharaoh made the children of Israel work harder than they had ever done before, desiring that they might no longer have straw given them to make

their bricks of, but that they should, from that time, be obliged to find their own straw, and at the same time get done as much work as they did when they had straw given them. And the people entreated the king to have pity on them, but in vain. He only said, "Ye are idle; ye are idle; there shall no straw be given you." Then the children of Israel were angry with Moses and Aaron; because, on account of what they had said to Pharaoh, he now treated the children of Israel worse than he had ever done before. "And when Moses spake unto the children of Israel, they hearkened not unto him, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." Then again, by the command of God, did Moses go unto Pharaoh to entreat him to let the children of Israel go; and he did, before the king the wonders which God had shewed him: but his heart was hardened, and he would not let them go. Then God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he took his walk by the river, and to take his rod in his hand, and to smite the waters of the river before him, which should all be turned into blood. And Moses did as God told him, "and took his rod, and stretched out his hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon its streams, its rivers, and its ponds, and upon all their pools of water, and upon all the vessels of wood and stone, in which they had water; and all these waters, and the waters of the river, were turned into blood. And the fish that were in the river died, and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the waters of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." Seven days did this sad change in the

waters last ; but still Pharaoh would not listen to the voice of Moses and Aaron. Then God told Moses to stretch forth his hand over the river, and over all the waters, and to bring frogs over all the land of Egypt, which should go up into the house of Pharaoh, and into his bed-chambers, and into his bed, and into the houses of his servants, and of his people, and upon their food, and upon King Pharaoh himself, and upon all his people. And Moses did so ; and frogs came over all the land of Egypt, as the Lord had said. Then King Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people, and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto the Lord." But no sooner did the Lord hear the voice of Moses, and take away this evil from Pharaoh and his people, than the king forgot what he had suffered, and would not let the Israelites go.

E. Oh ! mamma, what a wicked man he must have been, when he saw what dreadful things God could do, and yet would not obey him !

M. Yes, my love ; we see in King Pharaoh, a very wicked and hard-hearted man. Great and dreadful were the plagues that the Lord brought upon the land of Egypt, before the king would let the children of Israel go. At one time, he covered the whole land, both man and beast, with the most disgusting kind of insects ; then he sent grievous swarms of flies to torment them ; then he destroyed all their cattle ; then he afflicted every man and beast in Egypt with the most dreadful boils, which broke out over their whole bodies, and gave them the severest pain. Again the Lord sent mighty

hails, and thunderings, and rains, upon the land of Egypt, which were exceeding terrible, filling the hearts of the people with fear, and destroying all the fruits of the earth, and all the cattle of the field. " For the fire ran along upon the ground, and there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail." Upon this Pharaoh, as he had done several times before, whilst the fearful punishments of God were on him, called unto Moses and said, " Intreat the Lord, for it is enough, that there be no more mighty thunderings, and hail, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." And Moses went out of the city, from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands, in prayer, " unto the Lord, and the thunders, and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth;" that Pharaoh might see the mighty power of God, and know how that the earth is the Lord's. But, " when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart," and would not let the children of Israel go. Then it pleased God to send a host of locusts upon Egypt, to devour every leaf and blade of grass, that the hail had left, and whatever was beginning to sprout again: for so fruitful was the soil, that, in a very short time, all the trees and grass would have recovered their beauty once more. But clouds of locusts came at God's command, and destroyed every thing; for the locusts are a terrible kind of insect, which devour to the very root and bark,

so as to do very lasting injury to the countries which they visit, destroying in a few days the most beautiful verdure. Locusts are found chiefly in distant parts of Africa; but these locusts were brought, by a strong east wind, over the Red Sea from Arabia. In some places they are larger than our common grasshopper. "And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such." After this, the Lord sent a thick darkness over all the land of Egypt, a dreadful darkness, such as might be felt: for three days it lasted; so that "the Egyptians saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings;" for none of these dreadful plagues came near them; because the Lord had graciously put a division between his people and the Egyptians; and had severed the land of Goshen, where his people dwelt, from the land of Egypt, so that none of its dreadful plagues reached unto them; that King Pharaoh might know, that God is the Lord in the midst of the earth. This last punishment was one even more likely to be deeply felt by the Egyptians, than almost any other; for they worshipped the sun, and the light, and had a great awe and respect for darkness. But still the wicked and unhappy Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go: and so brought upon himself another plague, still more dreadful than any he had yet felt.

E. What was that, mamma? Could there be any thing more dreadful than what they had already suffered?

M. Yes, Edward; for God desired Moses to go unto Pharaoh and say, "Thus saith the Lord; at midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid servant, that is behind the mill. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast, that ye may know now how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians, and Israel." Such was the dreadful plague that God meant to bring upon Egypt, even to destroy all their first-born children throughout the whole land; so that there should scarcely be a house, in which there was not one dead. But although Moses told the king beforehand what should happen, yet did he not listen to Moses, nor let the children of Israel go out of his land. And God, in his mercy, was pleased to make a great difference, on this dreadful night, between his own people and the Egyptians; so that there was not one dead amongst them. And God commanded that every family of Israel should slay a lamb the evening before, and sprinkle the door-posts before the houses with the blood of the lamb; that so, when the angel of the Lord came down to destroy the first-born of Egypt, he might know the houses of Israel from those of Egypt, and pass over them, and save those that dwelt in them from death. After this the people of Israel were to roast and eat the lamb, whose blood they had sprinkled on their door-

posts. This lamb was to be called the *Passover*, because God should *pass over* those houses, whose doors were sprinkled with its blood. This was the last supper which the children of Israel were ever to eat in Egypt, even the feast of the *Passover*: and the memory of it was to be kept up amongst them for ever. Every year of their lives, as the night came round when they first had eaten it, this feast of the Passover was to be kept amongst them before the Lord; that they might never forget how, as on this night, God passed over the houses of the children of Israel, when he smote the Egyptians.

Now Edward will not, I know, have any difficulty in understanding that this feast of the Passover was commanded by God, not only to keep the Israelites in mind, how God had saved them from *death*, and from Egypt; but that it was also meant to point out our *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is the *true* Passover. The Paschal lamb, by which I mean the lamb slain at the Passover, should teach us to look to the Lamb of God, whose blood was to be shed for the sins of the world. Well may we now call Christ our Passover, since it is for his sake alone that God passes over our sins, and does not punish us as we have deserved.

The children of Israel did as the Lord commanded them. And it came to pass, that in the middle of that very night, the Lord smote all the first-born in Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat upon his throne, unto the first-born of the captive, that was in the dungeon. Then, in the stillness of that dreadful night, was there, indeed, as God had said, a great cry through all the land of Egypt,

such as there never was heard before, and such as shall never be heard any more again. In one night, every house hath a dead body in it. No man can comfort another; each is so full of his own sorrow. Fear and terror have taken hold of every heart in Egypt. Even the hard heart of Pharaoh has felt this blow. The hand of the Lord has smitten him at last. He finds, at length, that it is vain to fight against God. He rises up, even in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there is a great cry heard; for lo! there is not a single house, amongst all the dwellings of Egypt, where there is not one dead. You remember how the Egyptians had once caused the Hebrew children to be put to death. See now, how they are punished in like manner. And so it often happens still, that people are punished in the very way in which they have done wrong. Now Pharaoh can stand out against God no longer. He calls for Moses and Aaron by night, and says, "Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel, and go serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, and be gone; and bless me also." And the Egyptians hurried the children of Israel, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they were afraid, and said, we be all dead men. And the children of Israel went up out of Egypt, without even preparing for themselves any food: but by Moses' command, they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing, so that they took from them all their riches, and left them quite poor. For the Lord gave them favour in the sight of the Egyptians; so that they

gave them whatever they asked ; glad, even thus, to get rid of a people, because of whom they had suffered so much. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. The number that went out of Egypt was about six hundred thousand, besides women and children. Exactly four hundred and thirty years had passed away, from the time that Abraham first came into Canaan, until this night, when the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. They are called, in the Bible, the hosts or armies of the Lord, because they were led forth under the Lord as their king and guide. Thus were the words brought to pass, which Joseph spake unto them before his death, when he said : " God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land." Was not this night, when the Lord brought them out of Egypt, a night that ought always to be carefully remembered amongst the children of Israel ! was it not a night, that ought to be kept holy unto the Lord amongst them for ever ?

Now, Edward, let us look in the map, at the land of Goshen, to which the cities of Rameses and Succoth belonged. You remember, perhaps, that Rameses was one of the cities built by the Israelites. Their first journey was from that place to Suceoth, a city which was about thirty miles from Rameses. It will be very pleasant to us, I think, Edward, to follow the children of Israel from place to place, all the way from Egypt to Canaan ; and this we may do with great ease, by the help of the map, which we find in the family Bible. I know you love geography : and I am pleased to think, how much the geography of the Bible will interest you.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE PASSAGE OF ISRAEL THROUGH THE RED SEA.

M. WE are now come, Edward, to a very different part of the history of the children of Israel. We saw them, at first, leading the life of quiet shepherds in the land of Canaan ; we remember how a very grievous famine first took the sons of Jacob into Egypt, to buy corn ; and how, by means of Joseph's kindness, and the king's favour, the whole family were led to leave Canaan, and to settle in the land of Goshen. In that fertile country, we saw them, for a long time, feeding their flocks among its green pastures ; then came the death of Jacob, of Joseph, of Pharaoh, and of all that had lived at the same time with them : after this, things became greatly altered towards the children of Israel ; for then began that hard bondage and those cruel sufferings, of which we have so lately been speaking, followed by the dreadful plagues which God brought upon the hardened Pharaoh. Now we see them delivered, by the Almighty power of God, from Egypt and from Pharaoh, travelling towards that good land, that land flowing with milk and honey, which God had promised to their fathers. Do you remember at what place we left them last Sunday evening ?

E. Yes, mamma ; I think it was at Succoth, which you shewed me on the map : where did they go next ?

M. Their nearest way to the land of Canaan, as we can see, would have been by going towards Gaza, and the other cities of the Philistines, which were in Canaan. But God did not choose, that they should go that way : although it was short and easy ; for the Philistines were a warlike people ; and he knew, perhaps, that the Israelites, if they met with any difficulty or danger, would be likely to turn back again into Egypt. It pleased God, therefore, to lead the people towards the promised land, by a much longer way, even through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea ; that is, through a desert on the borders of the Red Sea. The Red Sea, which was also called the Arabian Gulf, divides Egypt, on its western side, from Arabia on the east. The Red Sea, in the Hebrew language, means the weedy sea, or the sea of weeds ; so called, most likely, because a great variety of sea-weed is seen on its shores at low water. Some people have thought that it got the name of Red Sea, from the colour of its waters, or of the sand beneath it ; but learned men say, that this was not the case : they think it more likely that it was first called the sea of Edom, from the country of Edom, on its borders ; and that because *Edom* means *red*, the Greeks called it the Red Sea. Now the children of Israel went on from Succoth through the wilderness, on the western borders of this sea, and came to Etham, a place about sixty miles from Succoth : here, for the second time since they left Egypt, they stopped to rest.

E. Had they no difficulty, mamma, in finding their way through the wilderness ?

M. No, my love ; the Lord himself was their

guide, that they might not wander in the sandy desert. There was no path for the feet to follow ; but the Lord went before them, by day, in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, so that they might go safely, both by night and by day. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

E. Mamma, does God move from one place to another ? I thought God was every where.

M. So he is, my love ; and when we read that the Lord went before them, it means that the glory of the Lord went before them, to shew them their way, in the shape of a glorious cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. This cloud was sent by God, as a token or sign to the people, that he was with them, to watch over and protect them ; and it was moved along with them, as they journied, by the same hand which first hung it over them, that the children of Israel might see that the Lord was with them every where. The pillar of a cloud and the pillar of fire were not only a comfort to the people in this manner, but the cloud would shelter them from heat by day, and the fire would give them light and warmth by night. So gracious, or full of mercy, was the care of God for his people ! How gladly and thankfully ought they to have followed such a leader ! How firmly and quietly might they have trusted themselves to his care, let their dangers have been ever so great ! The faith of Israel was soon to be tried : for when they had got as far as Pi-hahiroth, which is on the edge of the Red Sea, they lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians

marched after them. So hardened was king Pharaoh's heart, that even the last dreadful plague, which God had brought upon him, did not make him a better man. Scarcely had the Israelites gone out of Egypt, before he was sorry that he had let them go. And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him : and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them, and pursued after the children of Israel, and overtook them by the sea, beside Pihahiroth. Then the children of Israel were sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord. The Red Sea before them, the Egyptians behind, they saw no hope of safety ; and so little had they learnt from all the wonders God had done for them, to put their trust in him, that they were full of anger against Moses, for having brought them out of Egypt. In a moment, all God's goodness is forgotten, and all the mighty works that they have seen him do ; and although his pillar of a cloud was still hung on high over their heads, to assure and remind them of his presence, they said unto Moses, " Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness ? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt ? It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Sad, as you see, Edward, was the conduct of the Israelites, at this moment of danger : so sad, that we almost wonder that God did not take from them his pillar of a cloud, and leave them to fall into the hands of the Egyptians. But so great was his patience and goodness towards them, that in answer

to their angry words, we find him allowing his servant Moses to speak to them words of peace and comfort. And Moses said unto the people, “Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you to-day; for the Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more, for ever. The Lord shall fight for you; and ye shall hold your peace.” Little did the Israelites think in what a wonderful manner God was going to save them from the Egyptians. Little did they think, that he was about to open a path for them in the midst of the great deep. But so it was. “The Lord said unto Moses, Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” And the angel of the Lord, which went before the camp of Israel, removed, and went behind them: and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them; and it came between the camp of the Egyptians, and the camp of Israel: and it was a cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, whilst, at the same time, it gave light to the children of Israel; so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back, by a strong east wind, all that night, and made the sea dry land; and the waters were divided. Thus, by the almighty power of God, that very sea, which B.C. had filled the Israelites with fear, became to 1491. them a place of safety: for they went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them upon the right hand and the left.

E. Oh ! mamma, that was very wonderful ! Is it quite true ?

M. Yes, my love : full as the story is of wonders, I am sure that it is quite true ; for we find it in the Word of God ; and if you think for a moment, it will not seem so strange to you, that he, who *made* the sea, should be able to *divide* it. “ The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage terribly ; but God who dwelleth on high is mightier.”

E. What did Pharaoh think, mamma, when he saw what God had done for the children of Israel ? Did he turn back into Egypt again ?

M. No ; this most foolish, and most wicked man, set himself still against God, and madly followed the Israelites into the midst of the sea. But his end was now near at hand : the time came when God would no longer have patience with him. As soon as the Israelites had passed over on dry land, and safely reached the shore, the Lord said unto Moses, “ Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength ; when the morning appeared ; and the Egyptians, who were then in the midst of the sea, fled against it ; but the Lord overthrew them in the midst of the sea, and the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them ; there remained not so much as one of them. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that

great work, which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses." Then Moses wrote a beautiful song, or psalm of praise, which he and the children of Israel sang before the Lord. We will turn to it in the Bible, Edward, and read it together. Now can you not fancy, with what joyful and thankful hearts they must have sung this song before the Lord! Well might they say, "we will sing unto the Lord; for he hath triumphed gloriously!" Well might they call him their *strength*, when weak as they were, unable to take care of themselves, the chariots, and horses, and chosen captains of Egypt had not been able to hurt them! Well might the grateful Israelites exclaim, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, who is like unto thee?"—they who had seen so much of his goodness and his glory.



NINETEENTH SUNDAY EVENING.

ISRAEL FED FROM HEAVEN.

M. SOON, too soon, Edward, were the wonders of the Red Sea forgotten by the ungrateful Israelites. We read in the Bible, that after they had crossed the Red Sea, they came into the wilderness of Shur, a great sandy desert, which divides Egypt from Palestine, and reaches from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. And here, it being a desert place, the Israelites travelled three days without finding any water;—and when at length they came to Marah,

where there were springs, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Fainting with heat, fatigue, and thirst, this disappointment must have been very great; but we are grieved, when we read, that the people in their misery spoke against Moses. What! could a few hours' thirst make them forget all God's mercies? Can those lips, lately so full of praises, be moving now in murmurs? Moved at the sight of their sufferings, and at the sound of their complaints, "Moses cried unto the Lord: And the Lord shewed him a tree, which, when he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet." Thus God healed the waters for his ungrateful people, and gave them another proof of his goodness, his patience, and his power. Soon after this, we find them arriving at a place called Elim: where they found twelve wells surrounded with palm trees; and there they pitched their tents, by the side of cool waters, and under the shade of pleasant trees. The sight of these trees, Edward, must have gladdened the hearts of the Israelites; for in those desert places trees are very scarce. Travellers have told us lately, that those very wells and palm trees are still to be seen on the spot where the Israelites pitched their tents so many years ago. We know also, that the beautiful palm tree loves water: an old writer tells us, that, "it loves to drink all the year through." This tree grows, I believe, in most hot countries.

E. Did the children of Israel stay long in that pleasant place, mamma?

M. They seem to have staid there some time, glad, no doubt, of the water and the shade they

found there ; then they went on through the wilderness of Sin, towards Mount Horeb. In this wilderness they suffered from hunger, and murmured again against Moses, and against Aaron, saying, “Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord, in the land of Egypt ! when we did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill us all with hunger.”

E. Oh ! mamma, did they not remember how God had given them water, so short a time before, at Marah ?

M. They could not have forgotten it, my love ; but they were sadly unbelieving : their ingratitude and constant discontent sprung from want of *faith*. They could not trust in God, to give them what they needed ; although they had so many proofs of his almighty power and tender care. But again God heard their cries, and “ sent them bread from heaven to eat.”

E. Sent them bread from heaven, mamma ?

M. Yes, Edward ; the Lord said unto Moses, “Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you ; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day : at even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the ground on every side was covered with quails ; and in the morning, after the dew that lay on the ground was gone up, behold, on the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost, on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna. And Moses said unto

them, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

E. Mamma, did God really send this bread from heaven?

M. It is likely that the manna did not then fall for the first time, but that it might always have been found in the country where they then were; for we are told that it still falls in several parts of the world, in Arabia, in Poland, in Calabria, in Mount Lebanon, and in other places. The miracle then that God worked, was not so much the forming of a new food for his people, but the sending of it *daily*, and *constantly*, and in such large quantities as to feed so great a number of persons. In this wonderful manner, it never seems to have fallen, either before that time or since. The most famous and common manna is found in Arabia; and it is said to be exactly of the same shape, as that which fell for the Israelites, to look at, like a drop of dew frozen on the ground, very small, and white in colour. And the children of Israel were fed with manna, from heaven, for forty years, even all the time they were in the wilderness, until they came to the promised land, and this by one *continued* miracle. There are several things which make us feel quite sure, that this falling of the manna was one of God's wonderful miracles.

Firstly, It fell only six days in the week.

Secondly, It fell in such large quantities, that almost three millions of people fed on it continually.

Thirdly, There fell twice as much every sixth day, that there might be enough for the Sabbath.

Fourthly, What was gathered on the first five

days was spoilt, if it were kept longer than one day; but what fell on the sixth day, kept sweet for two days.

Lastly of all, The manna fell all the time the Israelites were in the wilderness; but as soon as they got to Canaan, when they could buy corn, the manna fell no more.

E. But, mamma, God gave them quails too; how did he bring them?

M. These birds, Edward, are known to pass, every spring, from Asia to Europe; and at this time of year, they are found in great quantities on the coast of the Red Sea. Now God brought these quails, by a great wind, all round the camp of the children of Israel, at the very moment that they were wanted. He brought them, and in such great quantities, that all the people fed on them for more than a month. Two or three millions of people there were that were fed in this wonderful manner. I dare say, Edward, you will like to know, that the quail of the desert is said to be very like the red partridge, but not larger than the turtle-dove.

Thus the Almighty was pleased to feed his murmuring and ungrateful people. Day by day their food was sent to teach them, no doubt, to look to God for their daily bread; to teach both them and us, that we depend upon God every day of our life. He could as easily have rained, at one time, enough for a month or a year, as for one day; but he is pleased that his creatures should look up to him *every* day; that every day he may receive from them fresh proofs of faith and thankfulness.

But in the falling of the manna from heaven,

there is one thing which we must particularly notice. Six days in the week this manna fell, but on the seventh day it fell not at all. On the sixth day of the week, the Israelites were directed to gather enough for that day and the seventh also. The rest of the week they were forbidden to gather more than enough for one day; and if they did gather more than they could eat, it was always spoilt: but on the sixth day, what fell remained sweet until the Sabbath was over. For the seventh day was "*the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord;*" a day which it pleased God thus to mark out, even by a miracle, from all the others,—that his people might "*remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,*" and rest that day from all the work they did on other days.

E. Was this the first time that God had taught his people to keep the Sabbath day holy?

M. No, Edward. The rest of the Sabbath, began with the creation of the world. In six days God made the heavens, and the earth, and all the things that are in them; and on the *seventh* day he rested from his work: therefore he blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:—that is, made it holy unto himself, or set it apart to his own service. You must never forget, therefore, that God made the Sabbath as soon as he made the world. "*This is the day which the Lord hath made:*"—let us, by his grace, rejoice and be glad in it. *This is the day which the Lord hath blessed:*—let us try to use it so as to find it a blessing to ourselves.

You see, then, that this was not the first time, that God had taught his people to keep the Sabbath

day holy; but he here *reminds* them of it. There is no doubt, that such holy men as Noah and Abraham, as Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, must have set apart this day as holy to the Lord; but the greater part of the world had early become very wicked: and we are told, in the book of Joshua (xxiv. 14.) that even the Israelites had, in Egypt, left the service of the true God, and followed the example of the Egyptians in worshipping idols. The rest of the Sabbath was likely, therefore, to have been forgotten among them: and God thus reminds them of it, and commands them again to keep it holy. "And the Lord said unto Moses, the Lord hath given you the Sabbath;" by which words we can see very clearly, that the Lord meant this day to be a *blessing* to his people, and that he granted it to them as a *gracious gift*.

But we must go on with their journey through the wilderness. At Rephidim, which lay in their way to Mount Horeb, God had commanded them to pitch their tents. Here, therefore, they stopped; and here they thirsted for water, and again murmured against Moses. Moses was tired of their complaints and discontent, and he cried unto the Lord, for he well knew he could do nothing better in trouble—he felt that he himself could do nothing with the people under his care; but he knew that the Lord could either quench their thirst, or put a stop to their rage. Nor did he cry in vain: "the Lord said unto Moses, go on before the people: and take with thee the elders of Israel: and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand. Behold I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb; and

thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel ; and when he smote the rock, the waters flowed out."

Thus did God open streams in the desert : " He clave the hard rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink thereof, as it had been out of the great depth. He brought waters out of the stony rock, so that it gushed out like rivers :" and this he did although his people " had sinned against him, and provoked the Most High in the wilderness."

They were now, as you see, Edward, come to the mountain of Horeb, that same mountain, from which God had appeared to Moses in the burning bush, when he first sent him before Pharaoh. I dare say you remember how God then told Moses, that when he had brought forth the people out of Egypt, they should serve God upon this mountain. And now that we find them encamped around Mount Horeb, we see how God's word came to pass.

E. Mamma, I should like to look at Mount Horeb on the map.

M. That you shall do, Edward ; and whilst you are looking at it, I must tell you, that this famous mountain is sometimes called *Horeb* in Scripture, and sometimes *Sinai*. *Horeb*, which means a *desert*, seems to have been the name of the whole mountain ; and *Sinai*, of the highest top of Mount Horeb. You will hear a good deal more of it another time ; but here we must leave off for to-night.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE LAW GIVEN FROM MOUNT SINAI.

M. WE left the children of Israel last Sunday evening encamped before the mountain of Horeb. This was one of the most important parts of their journey through the wilderness : for here, on this mountain, it pleased God to make known more of his will to the people than he had ever done before. Moses seems to have expected to receive in this place some particular instructions from God ; for we read that he went up upon Mount Sinai to present himself before the Lord. And here God told Moses that he meant, from this place, to speak to the people of Israel,—to make known to them how he wished them to live, and to give them a set of laws or commandments, which he expected them to follow and obey. And to encourage the people to obey his voice, and to follow the commandments he was going to give them, God began by desiring Moses to put them in mind of all he had done for them, in delivering them from the Egyptians, and how he had carried them safely out of the reach of all dangers even as an eagle carrieth her young ones, supporting and helping them with her wings : for these were the words which God spake unto Moses, saying, “ Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel : ye have seen what I did

unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Oh, Edward, what beautiful and gracious words were these,—spoken by the great King of heaven and earth to a few thousands of the sinful creatures which his own hand had made ;—made from the dust of the earth. Hear him promising that, if they would only obey his voice, he would look upon them as a *treasure* to himself ; that is, he would make them the particular objects of his care, and love, and favour, and condescend himself to be their king, to reign over his holy people. And Moses told the people these words of the Lord, and the people answered and said : " All that the Lord hath spoken we will do,—" And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever." Then God desired that the people would put away all their usual employments, and spend the two next days in preparing themselves to hear God's words ; in *preparing* themselves by prayer and by sorrow for their past sins, and by carefully putting away now all sin from amongst them. For though sin is always hateful to God, and full of danger to ourselves, yet then is it most hateful and most dangerous, when we bring it with us into the very presence of God. And although we ought to be holy at all times, yet then ought we to be more than

ever so, when we are going before God, either to offer up our prayers and praises, or to hear his holy word.

At the command of God, the people spent two days in making themselves ready to appear before him. "And it came to pass, on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount: and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud: so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mountain; and Mount Sinai was altogether in a smoke; because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended (or went up) as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder." By which we are to understand that "the angels of heaven, who attend upon God, called the people by a voice like that of a trumpet, but loud and terrible beyond the sound of all earthly trumpets."—"And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." Well might even the holy Moses, the servant of the Lord, tremble at the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God;—when God came with ten thousands of his saints, in the midst of fire and smoke, and thunder and lightning. For thus "the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount."—"And the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount;" but none of the rest of the people were allowed to draw near the glory of the Lord,—only Moses and the priests, or servants

of the Lord, who were set aside from all the others in a particular manner for the service of God.

Such was the solemn and awful manner in which God gave his laws, and made known his will unto the people of Israel. And the words which God then spake, are called the *Ten Commandments*. We shall find them in the twentieth chapter of the book of Exodus; and let us ever remember, my child, that they were spoken first in so terrible a manner, that the people, when they heard them, intreated that the words should not be spoken any more. "Let not God speak with us, said they, lest we die." For these commandments were spoken, as we have seen, amidst "fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the dreadful sound of the trumpet." Let us also remember, that these commandments were spoken for us, as well as for the children of Israel: and though we find them in the word of God, and do not receive them, as the children of Israel did, in such a manner as to fill our hearts with terror; yet let us never forget, that there is a day coming, when we shall have to give an account of our obedience to them. If we look to what the Bible has told us of that day, we shall find that it will be more terrible to the wicked than the day when God first gave the law from Mount Sinai. True the trumpet of an angel called the Israelites together; but does not the Bible tell us, that the voice of an archangel and the trump of God shall call us from our graves to judgment? God came with thousands of his saints to Mount Sinai; and the Bible tells us, that when our Lord Jesus Christ comes to judge the world, "Thousand thousands

shall minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand shall stand before him." On Mount Sinai there was fire and smoke, and thunder and lightning; and does not the word of God tell us that, in the great and terrible day of the Lord, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and that the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up?" Seeing, then, that we really believe, and look for such things as these, how careful we should be not to think lightly of, or break willingly, or even carelessly, any, even the least, of God's commandments.

I need not now tell you what the Ten Commandments are, that were thus given to the Israelites by God himself: because you learn them in the Church Catechism, and, as you learn them, are taught the meaning of them all.

These Ten Commandments, which were spoken not only for the Israelites, but for us too, were afterwards written by God upon two tables of stone, and given to Moses.

Besides these and other commands which were good for all people at all times, there were many rules and precepts which God was pleased to give for the use of the children of Israel in particular. Such were the commands relating to feasts and sacrifices: the feasts were to be kept holy to the Lord, in memory of certain events which had happened amongst themselves; as the feast of the Passover, which was to put them in mind of their deliverance from Egypt; and the feast of the Tabernacles or tents, which was meant to keep up the

recollection of their living so long in *tents* in the wilderness.

Of sacrifices, peace-offerings, and sin-offerings, there were a great many; all of which were meant to point out our Lord Jesus Christ. These were done away with, and were at an end, when our blessed Saviour was really come into the world, and had offered up *himself* as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He was a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice," sin-offering, and peace-offering, offered for sin; offered to make *peace* between God and man. The precious blood of Christ once shed, there was no further need of the blood of bulls and of goats, which could not really take away sin, but were meant to shew, how much we needed cleansing, and that we could obtain pardon in no other way, but through the "shedding of blood."

After God had talked some time with Moses, Moses went and told the people all the words of the Lord; and the people answered with one voice, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Then Moses offered sacrifices, and sprinkled the people with the blood of the sacrifices. After that, by the command of God, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, went up again into the mount, and seventy of the elders of Israel. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness."

E. What, mamma! Did they really see God? I thought you told me that no one had ever seen God at any time.

M. You are right, my child: when we read that they saw the God of Israel, we understand that they saw the *glory* of God, the *signs* of his majesty and presence, which were now more splendid and bright, than they had ever been before: under his feet, there was a pavement bright and glistening, like a sapphire stone; and like the purest and clearest sky, when it is all spangled with stars." Thus it was that they saw God.

And the Lord called Moses further up into the mount, saying, "Come up unto me in the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua, and Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai; and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day the Lord called unto Moses, out of the midst of the cloud; and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel." And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.



TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY EVENING.

MOSES IN THE MOUNT WITH GOD.

E. WHY did Moses stay so long in the mount, mamma?

M. He staid there, my love, to learn much more of God's will, and to receive from God a great many

rules and directions, for the use of the children of Israel. Amongst many other commands which God then gave Moses, he told him to build a tabernacle, which was a sort of tent or dwelling, which might be moved from place to place, and which was to serve the people as a church, whilst they were leading such a wandering and unsettled life: there the people were to meet together, to pray to God and to praise him.

This tabernacle, was also called a sanctuary, or holy place, because it was set apart from all other uses, and kept for God's service. There also God was to dwell, or to shew his glory, by the presence of a cloud. In this tabernacle there was to be an ark or chest, in which the two tables of the law were to be kept: the lid of this ark was to be called the mercy-seat, because there the blood of the sacrifices was to be sprinkled, which God in his mercy was pleased to accept. At each end of this mercy-seat a cherub of gold was to be placed; these cherubim were winged figures, meant to remind the Israelites of the angels which stand before God in heaven, ready to do his will. It was between these golden cherubim, that the cloud or glory of the Lord was to dwell; and, from this, God is sometimes said in the Bible to dwell between the cherubim. In this tabernacle or house of God, there was also to be an altar on which the sacrifices were to be offered, and other articles proper for the service of God.

The Israelites were to shew their respect for God, and for his worship, by making every part of this tabernacle as magnificent and beautiful as they

could. Numerous, beautiful, and costly, were to be the different materials of the tabernacle, and great trouble to be taken in getting them together. The ark was to be made of shittim wood, which grew near Mount Sinai, and was remarkably beautiful, solid, smooth, and strong. This tree is thought to have been the acacia, which is by far the largest and most common tree found in the deserts of Arabia. It abounds with flowers of the sweetest smell; and the gum arabic is got from it. This ark was to be covered, inside and outside, with pure gold; the cherubim also, at the top of it, were to be of gold also: the wings of the cherubim were to be stretched forth above, so as to cover the whole mercy-seat; their faces looking one toward another. The tabernacle was to be surrounded with curtains of fine twined linen, blue, purple and scarlet. This fine linen was to be made of goats' hair; for the goats of Asia have very long, white, bright, and fine hair, hanging down to the ground: in beauty it almost equals silk, and is never sheared, but combed off the goats. The shepherds are very careful of these goats, washing them often in the rivers. The women spin the hair into fine linen; which is afterwards beautifully dyed, or stained, with rich, bright colours. The tabernacle was to be divided into two parts; the inner part was to be called the holy place, or holy of holies: there the ark was to kept. None but the high-priest was to enter there; and that only once a year, when he was to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. This part of the tabernacle was to be divided from the rest by a vail or curtain of blue, and purple, and scarlet linen.

Such was the beautiful place in which God was pleased to be worshipped by the children of Israel ! And Aaron, the brother of Moses, was chosen by God to act as high-priest, or chief minister, in the tabernacle : that is, to lead the services of the people, and to offer sacrifices. For this purpose he was set apart from the others, as a holy person to the Lord, to minister in holy things. Aaron and his sons were the first persons set apart in this manner for the service of God ; and afterwards God chose the whole tribe of Levi for this purpose ; so that if one priest died, another was chosen from that tribe to take his place. And God desired Moses to have holy and beautiful garments made for Aaron and his sons, to wear in the tabernacle, that they might be different from the rest of the people ; who were thus to be taught to respect their ministers, and the God whom they served. These garments were to be of several different parts : one of them, which was particularly beautiful, was called the breast-plate. It was made of twelve precious stones ; one stone to represent each of the tribes of the children of Israel, with the names of each tribe engraven on the stones.

E. What were the names of the precious stones of which the breast-plate was made ? How beautiful it must have been, mamma.

M. Yes, Edward, it must indeed ; for there was a sardius, and a topaz, and a carbuncle ; an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond ; a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst ; a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper : most of which we know to be very beautiful.

Now that all things might be made according to God's desire, we find that he gave several persons

among the Israelites great wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, in all manner of workmanship. Yes ; God gave them power and skill to work in gold and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting and setting of stones, and in the carving of timber : all this wisdom came from God, and all the wisdom that we find in the world, all the knowledge, and skill, and learning, that wise men possess :—this comes from God too.

And when the Lord had made an end of instructing Moses about the tabernacle, and all that he wished him to do, he gave unto Moses two tables of stone, with the Ten Commandments written on them, which he had spoken to the people from Mount Sinai, “ written with the finger of God.”—“ For the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.”

Now Moses, as I have said before, was forty days and forty nights in the mount with God : and the people began to wonder what had become of him, and to be tired of waiting and looking for his return. Although the glory of the Lord still rested on the mount, and the presence of the Lord was clearly there, they pretended to think that God and Moses had left them ; and they said one to another, “ Let us make us gods which shall go before us : for as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him : and they made them a golden calf, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt ; and they worshipped the golden calf which they had set up.” Now, Edward, if we read the first and second of those commandments,

which God had so lately spoken to them in so terrible a manner from Mount Sinai, we shall find how great their wickedness was : for there God had positively forbidden them to make any graven image to worship, or the likeness of any thing in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. But so evil were their hearts, so ready to wander from God, so quick to forget his mercies, that, a few short days only left to themselves, they set up a golden calf to worship. Thus they made themselves like the Egyptians, who knew not the true and living God, and whom they had often seen worshipping calves and other foolish things. And these were the people who had been so wonderfully taken out from among the heathen (or those who knew not God) ; “ the people for whom the sea had made a path, for whom the heavens had rained food, for whom the rocks had sent forth water ; who had been guided and guarded by fire and cloud, who had heard the voice of God himself ! ”

E. Oh, mamma, what wicked people ! How very angry God must have been with them !

M. Yes ; the anger of the Lord was exceeding fierce. And he said unto Moses, “ Go, get thee down ; for thy people have corrupted themselves ; they have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them ; they have made them a molten calf, and worshipped it ; and have sacrificed thereunto ; and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people ; now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against

them and consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation."

But Moses loved the people of Israel; and the idea of being great himself, could not lessen his sorrow for them: and he prayed earnestly for the children of Israel unto the Lord his God, reminding him of all that he had done for them, and beseeching him to turn from his fierce anger against them. And Moses also reminded God of his servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of the promises which he had made to them. And the Lord, who is abundant in mercy, graciously allowed Moses thus to pray for his people, and graciously heard his prayer; so as not to destroy them altogether in a moment. And Moses turned and went down from the mount, with the two tables which God had given him in his hand. "And when Joshua heard the noise of the people, as they shouted, he said unto Moses, there is a noise of war in the camp. But Moses said it is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the voice of them that sing do I hear. And as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, he saw the calf, and the people dancing before the calf: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast down the tables out of his hand, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire. And he stood in the gate of the camp, and said, who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. Then Moses, by the command of God, desired the sons of Levi to take their swords, and

go in amongst the people, and kill them; and the sons of Levi did so: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand." And to the rest of the people Moses said, " ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord," meaning that he would go and pray for them, that they might be forgiven.

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, " Oh ! this people have sinned a great sin. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin." But God was still exceedingly angry with the children of Israel; for their sin had been very great: and he told Moses to depart from that place, and lead the people on towards the land which he had promised them: and he said that he would send an angel to guide them, but that he would not go with them himself any more; because they were a stiff-necked people. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned. Well might they mourn when God thus departed from them, and would not remain with them any more ! Well might they mourn ! For what could they do without God ? Who could be to them what he had been ? And Moses said unto the Lord, " If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." Moses knew well that there was no happiness, or peace, or safety *without God*.

The land of Canaan might be a good land; it might be flowing with milk and honey; it might be full of all the comforts of life; its fields might be green; its hills and pastures fair: but if God went not up with them, what good should all this do them ? The presence and blessing of God are the only things that can make us really happy. Without them, the sun may shine, and the earth may look

glad; but the heart of man cannot be really happy. Moses, the servant of God, knew this. He loved God; and if God left him, he cared not for any thing else. "If thy presence go not with me, carry *me* not up hence." As if he had said, "Let the children of Israel go up to the land of Canaan, if they like, and try to be happy there; but as for me, if thou, Lord, goest not with me, I care not for that good land."

E. Oh, mamma, what did God say to Moses?

M. "The Lord said, my presence shall go with thee; and I will giye thee rest. I will do these things that thou hast said, for thou hast found grace (or favour) in my sight; and, I know thee by name :" by which we understand, that the Lord had a particular love for Moses, and looked upon him as a friend. How must these gracious words have comforted the heart of Moses! They made him long, also, to know more of God. And he said unto the Lord, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory. And the Lord said unto Moses, thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live: but I will make all my goodness pass before thee: and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee."

God knew that the eye of man could not bear the full and dazzling brightness of his glorious countenance, before whom, even the angels before the throne of God cover their faces:—but he was willing so far to hear the prayer of his servant, as to allow him to see such a portion of his glory, as he would be able to bear, and to make himself known to him in all his gracious characters. Therefore, Moses, by the command of God, rose up early in the morn-

ing, and went up unto Mount Sinai. "And the Lord came down in the cloud, and stood with him there; and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed himself to his servant Moses, under the name of Jehovah, the Lord God; merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Then "Moses made haste and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped. And he said, if now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us: for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity, and our sin." Then the Lord again repeated his hatred against idolatry, and again commanded Moses, that his Sabbath should be kept holy. And the Lord desired him to write the Ten Commandments again upon two tables of stone. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights with the Lord. "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tables of the law in his hand, that when Aaron and the children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone: and they were afraid to come nigh unto him. And Moses put a veil upon his face, whilst he talked to them, and gave them all the commandments which the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai."

E. What was it, mamma, that made Moses' face shine?

M. His face, my love, was surrounded with rays of light: he had been conversing with the Lord forty days, and beholding his glory; some marks of which

seem to have been left behind on the face of Moses. When Moses' face thus shined, he was still upon earth, and still more a *mortal* body. How glorious then must those appear, who have changed this *mortal* or dying body for an immortal or never dying form; and who live for ever with God and their Saviour in heaven! What bright, and glorious, and shining beings must they be. How beautiful the bodies which they shall put on at the morning of the resurrection!

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY EVENING.

THE SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN.

M. AFTER God had finished instructing Moses, he and the children of Israel departed from Mount Sinai: they had several more journeys to make, before they could reach the promised land: and wherever they went they carried with them the tabernacle; which they built according to the command of God. And the glory of the Lord rested on the tabernacle; the cloud above thereon; and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In the morning, "the cloud covered the tent; and in the evening, there was upon it, as it were, the appearance of fire. So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night." And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the children of Israel knew that God meant them to go on their journeys; and when the cloud

rested on it again, then they knew that they were to stop, and they pitched their tents. "Thus, at the command of the Lord, they journeyed; and at the command of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode, they rested in their tents; even if it abode many days, they rested; and whenever the cloud was taken up, whether it was by day or by night, they journeyed." Thus wonderfully did the Lord lead them every step of their way, throughout all their journeys until they arrived safely on the borders of the land of Canaan. There God desired Moses to send men to search the land of Canaan; for the people of Israel were afraid to go up into it, until they knew a little of the state of the country. And Moses sent twelve men, one man from each of the tribes, or families of Israel, and said unto them, "Go see the land what it is, and the people that dwell therein, whether they be strong or weak, many or few; and what the land is, that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. So they went up and searched the land;" and they came to a brook or valley afterwards, called Eshcol. The grapes in the land of Canaan seem to have been immensely large: those which grew about Mount Lebanon in particular, are said to be as large as prunes: and so beautiful were the fruits they found in this fertile valley of Eshcol, that they cut down there a bunch, with one cluster of grapes, so large that two men were obliged to carry it between them on a stick: they took also of the pomegranates and the figs. After forty days spent in searching

the land, they went back to Moses and Aaron, and all the people, and shewed them the fruit of the land; and they told them that such were the fruits of the land of Canaan, and that it was certainly a land flowing with milk and honey; but in other respects, these men gave a very evil account of the land itself, and a very frightful one of the people who dwelt there, whom they called giants; saying that, by the side of them, they seemed to themselves as grasshoppers; and that it would be better, after all, not to go up into the land, for that the people were stronger than they, and that they should not be able to overcome them. Such was the account given by the men whom Moses had sent to search the land; so that they filled the hearts of the children of Israel with fear, and sorrow, and discontent. But two of the men, whose names were Caleb and Joshua, declared to the children of Israel, that what the others had told them was not true. And they told them all, saying, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land; a land which floweth with milk and honey." Then they reminded the children of Israel, that God was able to give them the land, and to give them power to overcome it, saying: "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us. Only rebel ye not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not."

But the people would not listen to Caleb and to Joshua, nor believe what they said; for their hearts were exceedingly perverse towards God: "and they all lifted up their voices, and cried, and

wept all night. And they murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and said, "Would God we had died in the land of Egypt; or would God we had died in the wilderness! were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" And so great was their anger against Joshua and Caleb, that they wanted to stone them with stones.

And the anger of the Lord was exceeding great against the children of Israel: and because they had acted in this wicked manner, God said they should not see the land which he had promised them; no, not one of them should enter that land, excepting his servants Joshua and Caleb; but that the rest of the people should die in the wilderness; and that their children should wander there, until all those, who had now and so often before sinned against the Lord, had died and were buried.

But Caleb and Joshua, who had done all they could to bring the people to a better mind, and who had shewed their faith and confidence in God so boldly, following him fully—of them God said, that he would bring them into the land of promise. Then to his perverse and rebellious people, God said, "Turn you, and get you into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea." This was a very grievous punishment; and when Moses told these sayings unto the children of Israel, they mourned greatly. But their grief seems to have been the grief of disappointment only, not of sorrow for those sins by which they had brought down the punishment of so good and gracious a God upon them. We do not hear that they confessed their sins in his sight, and humbly and earnestly sought for pardon; but we

read, that when God had desired them to turn back into the wilderness, they would not obey his voice, but determined to go up into the land which he had promised them.

Though the ark moved not, though the cloud did not arise, and though Moses did not depart out of the camp, they presumed to go up to the top of the hill, near which they were encamped at Kadesh. But the Lord was not among them, to protect them, and their enemies, the Amalekites and the Canaanites, who dwelt in that hill, came down upon them, and smote them, and drove them back again.

As for the ten men who had brought so evil an account of the promised land ; they died by the hand of the Lord. And all the people turned back, to wander in the wilderness forty years.

Such was the sad punishment of their unbelief, or want of *faith*. How could they expect that God would give that good land to such a rebellious and ungrateful people ? A people who could not believe, who could not trust in him, after having seen so many of his wondrous works. Sad, indeed, must it have been, to tread again all their weary steps in the wilderness ! and that just at the moment when, after all their sufferings, the land they had so long desired was before them ! bitter must have been their disappointment ! But the fault was their own : " they could not enter in, because of unbelief." Now all these things were written in the Bible for our admonition ; that is, to warn or guard us against those sins which the children of Israel were guilty of—those sins by which they lost the land of Canaan. We, my child, are wanderers too ;—wan-

derers for a little while in a world full of dangers, and difficulties, and sufferings. But there is a promised land before us, which, if we hold fast our faith and obedience, we shall, by God's mercy, through Jesus Christ, reach in peace and safety at last. Our promised land is heaven;—a far better land than Canaan. But we, like the Israelites, may lose it, if we fall into the sins of which they were guilty. Let us, therefore, take care that there be not in us an evil heart of unbelief, so that we depart from the living God. Let us labour, by faith and patience, to enter into that rest which God has promised us: for there is a rest remaining for the people of God; a rest from sin and sorrow, even an everlasting rest in heaven.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY EVENING.

ISRAEL ON THE BORDERS OF THE PROMISED LAND.

M. WE do not hear very much of what happened to the children of Israel, during the rest of the time that they wandered in the wilderness, but nearly thirty-eight years more they did wander there, (two years not having quite passed when they first drew near to the promised land), going backwards and forwards from place to place, until all the persons who had been first brought out of Egypt were dead. And in the first month of the fortieth year from the time of their first leaving Egypt, they came again to Kadesh; which was, as you remember, the place on the bor-

ders of the land of Canaan, from which Moses sent twelve men to search the land. Get the map, and let us trace there all their wanderings, from the time God sent them back into the wilderness until they came to Kadesh again. There they seem to have rested, and there to have sinned against the Lord again as they had often done before: for there was no water there, and they did chide with Moses, and wickedly wished that they had died with their brethren in the wilderness. And they said, "Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink."

And God desired Moses to take his rod, and gather the people together, and to speak unto the rock before their eyes; and God said, that at the voice of Moses the rock should give forth its water, and that he should bring forth water for them out of the rock, and thus give all the people and their cattle drink.

And Moses and Aaron gathered all the people together, and said, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" These were angry words; such as we have never heard Moses speak before; for he was exceeding meek: but here he was provoked by the murmurs of the children of Israel, and spake unadvisedly with his lips: that is, he spoke without thinking, in a moment of anger and impatience. And Moses displeased God yet more than this: for instead of standing before the rock, and only speaking to command the waters to flow, as God had desired, he struck the rock twice

with his rod. And the water came out abundantly so that all the people drank, and their cattle also. But Moses could have had but little pleasure in the sight; for the Lord was much displeased with him for what he had done; because he had disobeyed the word of the Lord, and shewed great unbelief in striking the rock, instead of speaking to it; as if he doubted, whether God could so easily open streams in the wilderness: then this act of disobedience and want of faith was done in the sight of all the people; so that Moses had by this means dishonoured God before them, that is, shewed a want of respect to his command.

The place where this happened was called Meribah, which means strife. "And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, therefore ye shall not bring this people into the land which I have given them."—"And Moses besought the Lord, saying, O Lord, my God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon." But the Lord was wroth with him, and would not hear his prayer.

After this the children of Israel journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto Mount Hor. There the Lord spake unto Moses saying, "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people;" that is, Aaron shall die: "for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel; because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah."

And, by the command of the Lord, Moses and Aaron went up together unto Mount Hor ; and Moses took the garments of Aaron, those “ holy garments, for glory, and for beauty, which he wore as the priest of God, and put them upon Eleazar his son, who was made priest instead of Aaron. And Aaron, the servant of the Lord, died ; and all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.”

The Israelites were now, you know, on the borders of the land of Canaan ; and we find that the king of the Canaanites, not liking them to enter the land, fought against them ; but the Lord enabled Israel to overcome him, and to destroy him, and his people, and many of their cities.

They might now have been very soon in the promised land, by passing through the country of Edom : but the king of Edom would not let them go through ; and they were therefore obliged to take a long way round, even along the borders of Edom, by the way of the Red Sea ; for God did not wish to give them that land, because it belonged to the family of Esau ; and therefore he would not let them fight against the people of Edom.

To be obliged to take so long a journey, must have been very disappointing to the children of Israel, when they were within sight of the promised land, and might so soon have entered. But after all God’s goodness to them, they should have borne this trial patiently, and have waited cheerfully for the moment when he should lead them in. But, instead of this, we read that “ the soul of the people was much disengaged because of the way ; and

they spake against God and against Moses. Then the Lord in his anger sent fiery serpents among the people, which bit them ; and much people of Israel died." For the serpents in these deserts where they were travelling, were of so poisonous a kind, that their bite was deadly ; nothing could cure it : they were also flying serpents, with wings like bats. So dreadful was the punishment that the Israelites brought upon themselves by their disobedience and unwillingness to do what God commanded them !

Then they saw how foolish it was to provoke God's anger against them, and they came to Moses and said, " We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee ; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, " Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole ; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."

Here, Edward, we see again the wonderful power of God ! The bite of these serpents was, as you have heard, a deadly bite ; there was no way known of curing it ; but now, by merely looking up to a brazen serpent, all those who had been bitten were healed. Here too was a trial of the faith of the people. If they wish to be healed, they must look up to the brazen serpent : by this they were to shew their *faith* : they were to shew that they really believed

God to be able to heal them in this wonderful manner; and their faith saved them. For all who looked up to the serpent of brass lived.

When we read of this miracle, we are to think of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our blessed Saviour has himself taught us, that the brazen serpent in the wilderness is to remind us of his death upon the cross. He told his disciples, that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must he be lifted up, that whosoever believed in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

As the Israelites suffered from the deadly bite of fiery serpents, so we suffer from the no less deadly attacks of *sin*: and as the serpent of brass was lifted up in the sight of the perishing Israelites, that they might behold and live, so Christ, being made like unto sinful man, was lifted up as a sin-offering upon the cross, that we might look to him in humble faith, and for the sake of his death, might be saved from the dreadful consequences of *sin*, which *poisons* and kills the *soul*.

We do not hear any thing more that happened to the children of Israel, as they went on their way by the borders of Edom towards the promised land; excepting that the Lord gave them power to overcome all the enemies who would have hindered them from entering the land. At length they came close to the borders of the long looked for Canaan, and pitched their tents in the plains of Moab, on the side of the river Jordan, the city of Jericho being on the other side of the river.

You may look, Edward, at the places on the map. Next Sunday evening, I shall have a good deal to

tell you about the king of Moab. Try to think over, in the mean time, all that you have heard of the children of Israel, so as to be able to remember pretty well what happened to them, from the time of their leaving Egypt, to their pitching their tents in the plains of Moab, where we are leaving them to-night.

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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY EVENING.

BALAAAM, OR THE PROPHET WHO WAS GREEDY OF GAIN.

M. WE left the children of Israel, Edward, last Sunday evening, encamped in the plains of Moab, by the side of the river Jordan. Now Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time; and he had seen what the children of Israel had done to many of their enemies. Amongst the rest, he had seen how quickly they had overcome Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan. "And Moab was sore afraid of the children of Israel, because they were many; and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel." And he called the elders of his people together, that they might consider what was best to be done: and it was settled that the Moabites should fight against Israel, notwithstanding their great numbers.

At this time there was living in Mesopotamia, beyond the river Euphrates, a prophet of God, whose name was Balaam, one of the few worshippers of the true God, who were still found in that country where

Abraham once lived. These prophets were held in great respect by all the idolatrous nations round about; and Balaam seems to have been well known, even by so distant a people as the Moabites, for we find Balak and his people sending messengers to him, to beg him to come and curse the children of Israel; saying, "behold there is a people come out from Egypt: behold they cover the face of the earth; and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me; for I believe that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." Balak thought by getting a prophet of God to curse the Hebrews, that is, to call down evil from God upon them, that he should be able to smite them, and drive them out of the land. And the messengers of the king of Moab departed, and came unto Balaam, and told him the words of Balak. And Balaam desired the messengers to wait one night in his house, that he might pray to God, and see what God wished him to do. "And the Lord said unto Balaam, thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse this people; for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning and said unto the princes of Balak, get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to let me go:" and they went back unto Balak, and told him that the prophet would not come with them.

So far Balaam seems to have acted rightly; for when the messengers of Balak first came to him, he most likely knew nothing about the children of Israel, excepting what he heard from them. He did not know that they were the people of the most

high God, whom he was leading to the land of Canaan. The wonderful news of all that God had done for this people, had never perhaps reached the ears of Balaam. There was, therefore, no harm in his keeping the messengers a little while, whilst he learnt the will of God concerning this people.

When Balak found that the prophet had not come with his messengers, he sent yet again princes more and more honourable than they; who came to Balaam and said, thus saith Balak, let nothing I pray thee hinder thee from coming to me; for I will raise thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me; come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. Balaam's first answer was, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."

Well would it have been for Balaam, if he had sent away the messengers with this answer! But though a prophet of God, Balaam was a wicked man. The love of money had crept into his heart; and the thoughts of Balak's silver and gold made him wish to go and curse the people of Israel, though God had told him they were blessed. Instead therefore of sending away the princes of Moab directly, he kept them a night in his house, meaning to pray to God, and hoping that God might still give him leave to go. The prayers of Balaam were heard; that is, God was pleased to allow him to go; but, by the end of the story, we see very clearly, that his wishes were granted him only as a punishment.

There could be no blessing on such prayers as

Balaam's. To pray for what God has forbidden, is to set our wills against his will; and if our prayers are heard, it cannot be because God is pleased with us, but because he will punish our obstinacy. Thus it seems to have been with Balaam. God was angry with him for wishing to be rich, more than to please God; for wishing to curse those, whom God had called blessed: and as Balaam did not wish to follow the will of God, he was left to take his own wicked and foolish way. He was, therefore, permitted by God to go, if he chose, with the princes of Moab; but God was greatly displeased when Balaam rose up in the morning, and really went with them: for God saw his heart, and his greedy desire of becoming rich and great. And the Lord's anger was kindled, because he went; and he sent an angel to meet him in the way. "Now Balaam was riding on his ass, and his two servants were with him: and the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass was afraid of the angel of the Lord, and turned out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way again. But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again. And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam. Now Balaam and his

servants did not see the angel: for God would not allow them to see it; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, so that she spoke with the voice of man, and said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said, I would there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill thee. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and he bowed down his head and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. And the angel of the Lord said, go with the men; but only the words that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak." Thus Balaam was allowed to go on in his perverse way; because he still shewed a wish to do so, and an unwillingness to turn back: he says unto the angel, "if it displease thee, I will turn back again;" when he knew that God did not wish him to go. His heart was fixed on earthly treasures, so that neither the word of God, nor the voice of the dumb ass, nor the angel's sword, could raise his mind to heaven, and teach him to think more of God's favour than of worldly riches and honours.

So Balaam went with the princes of Moab, and

Balak went out a great way to meet him: and Balaam went with him, and came to Kirjath Huzeth; and took him up to some very high places, from which he could see the utmost part of the people of Israel. And here, from the top of the rocks and of the hills, Balaam saw the children of Israel stretched out in vast multitudes on the plains below. "And Balak said, come curse me Jacob, and come defy Israel."

Gladly would the wicked prophet have cursed the people for the sake of obliging Balak, and to obtain his reward; but God would not suffer it: and the words that the Lord put into his mouth he was obliged to speak. And the Lord put blessings into the lips of Balaam, instead of curses; so that, on seeing the children of Israel on the plains below, he said, "how goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth; as gardens by the river's side; as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted; and as cedar trees beside the waters! Blessed is he that blesseth thee; and cursed is he that curseth thee!" Then he ended by saying, that as long as the children of Israel served God truly, they should continue to prosper in spite of all their enemies. Thus, instead of cursing Israel, Balaam blessed them altogether. So astonished was he at their multitudes, and at the goodly appearance of their tents, which were without number, that he calls them beautiful as far extended valleys, well watered gardens, trees bearing spices of sweet smell, lofty and spreading cedars planted by the waters. The lign aloes are very sweet-smelling trees, that grow in India and

Arabia, and are spoken of as trees which the Lord hath planted, because they grow of themselves without any labour, care, or art of man.

The cedar, too, was one of the pleasantest trees in eastern countries, and had a very fragrant smell.

Thus the Lord turned all the curses, which Balak and Balaam had wished to bring upon his people, into blessings.

And Balak was greatly disappointed; and his anger was kindled against Balaam, and he sent him away in disgrace, without any of those riches and honours which he had hoped to get, and for the sake of which he had so madly thought it worth his while to act against the will of the Lord his God.

Foolish, wicked man! As if it could be ever worth while to make God angry with us. As if all the treasures and riches of this world, could make up to us for the loss of the real riches, and true treasures of heaven.

And Balaam rose up, and went unto his place; and Balak also went his way. Soon after this we read, that by the command of the Lord, the children of Israel made war against the people of Midian, and slew the kings of Midian, and all the men, and burnt the cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles with fire. And Balaam also, who had left Moab, but still remained in Midian amongst the enemies of the Lord, they slew with the sword. He had come among a people who knew not God, to get riches by unrighteousness, and he fell by the sword of Israel. In the bitter moment of death, he no doubt saw the wickedness and folly of which he had been guilty, and wished, when it was too late,

that he had not gone with the princes of Moab, that he had not set his will against the will of God, and tried to curse those whom He had blessed.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY EVENING.

THE LATTER DAYS OF MOSES.

M. THE children of Israel were now about to enter the land of Canaan. They had only to cross over the river Jordan, and they would really be in that land, for which they had looked so long.

And now the time was come in which it pleased God that his servant Moses should die: for you remember God had said, that he should not enter the land of Canaan. And though Moses grieved that he could not go over, and see that good land and fair, which God had promised to his people, yet he was willing to die, if it were God's will. But, before his death, he called all the people of Israel together, to talk to them once more, to put them in mind of all that God had done for them, and to entreat them to serve and love God.

Moses loved the children of Israel; and the last moments of his life were spent in doing them good. And Moses told them, that they were now about to go over Jordan, and enter that land which God had given them: and he begged them, when they got there, and were happy, and at ease, and full of blessings, not to forget the Lord their God, but to bless him for the good land which he had given them. He put them in mind of all that the Lord

had done for them ; how he had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and led them through that great and terrible wilderness which they had so lately left ; where there were fiery serpents and scorpions ; and where there was no water ; and how God had brought them out water out of the rock of flint, and fed them with manna in the wilderness. Then he put them in mind, that now, after all their long wanderings and great wickedness, God had kept his promise, and brought them to a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills ; a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates ; a land of oil-olive and honey ; a land where they should eat bread without scarceness, and should lack nothing in it ; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills they might get brass.

But Moses took care to tell the children of Israel that it was not for their righteousness that the Lord had given them this land ; for they had been a stiff-necked and rebellious people, who had provoked the Lord to anger. Therefore, it was not for any goodness of theirs that God gave them the land, but partly for the sake of the promise he had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and partly to punish the people who dwelt in Canaan.

And Moses told the children of Israel, that if they would remember the Lord their God, and hearken to his voice, and do all the commandments which he had commanded them, then the Lord their God should set them high above all nations of the earth, and that they should have God's blessing upon them in all that they did, in all that they had ; that they

should be blessed in the city, and blessed in the field : blessed in their basket and their store ; blessed when they came in and blessed when they went out ; and that the Lord should command his blessing upon them in all that they set their hand unto, and should prosper them, and make them happy, so that they and their families should rejoice before the Lord, for the blessings that he had given them.

But Moses knew the children of Israel well ; he had often, in the forty years that he had led them in the wilderness, had his patience tried by their perverseness and disobedience ; and therefore he felt much afraid that, although the blessings of obedience were so very great, they would still fall off from God. He therefore not only set blessings before them to encourage them to serve God, but great and terrible evils also, that they might be afraid of making him angry with them. He told them, if they did not hearken to the voice of the Lord their God, to keep his commandments which he had commanded them, that then they should serve their enemies, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things ; and that the Lord should make their plagues wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance : even all the diseases of Egypt, of which they were much afraid, should God bring upon them, every sickness and every plague, until they were destroyed : for though they were now like the stars of heaven for multitude, they should then be left few in number ; and the Lord should scatter them among all people, from one end of the earth even to the other, among nations where they should

find no ease, nor any rest for the soles of their feet. But the Lord would give them a trembling heart, and a failing eye, and sorrow of mind; so that their life should hang in doubt before them, and they should fear night and day. In the morning, from their unhappiness they should say, "Would God it were even!" and at even, dreading the stillness and darkness of the night, they should say, "Would God it were morning!"

Such, and many more, were the dreadful punishments which Moses foretold to the children of Israel, if they should turn away from God: and Moses spoke by the command of God, and as a prophet who knew things to come. The blessings he promised them were great; the evils dreadful. Thus, he set before them life and good, death and evil, blessing and cursing; that they might choose the good, and avoid the evil; that they might love the Lord their God, and obey his voice, and cleave unto him; and thus might be blessed by him, with long life, and dwell in the land which he had promised to their fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

When Moses had made an end of speaking all these things unto the children of Israel, he told them that he was now a hundred and twenty years old, so that he could no more go out and come in among them; but that they must not grieve because they should lose him, who had been their leader for so many years; for that the Lord their God should go over Jordan before them, and that Joshua should be their leader, as the Lord had said.

Then Moses called Joshua, and said unto him, before all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage;

for thou must go with this people. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee ; he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee ; fear not, therefore, and be not dismayed."

After this Moses spake, in the ears of all the children of Israel, a beautiful and magnificent song, in which he set forth God's great mercy, and foretold how dreadful his anger would be, if they should forsake him. He spoke of God's past favours to them ; when he had chosen them out of all other nations to be his own people. He found them in a desert land, and in a waste, howling wilderness : but he had led them about, and instructed them, and kept them as the apple of his eye : that is, in the wilderness God had taken them for his own people, and had led and guided them in all the dangers of the way, preserving them from harm and danger, as carefully as the sight of the eye is preserved from injury by the eyelid which hangs over it, " As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad hen wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," so the Lord alone did lead them, and by his Almighty power alone protected them. Moses had, most likely, many opportunities in the deserts and mountains of Arabia, of seeing the eagle's tender care of its young ; and even a child, Edward, can understand, I think, that he wished in this way to shew the children of Israel, how great God's love was to his people. Many more were the beautiful things that he said in his song, which it would be difficult now to make you understand ; but as you already love poetry, you will read it, I am sure, some day, with great delight. Then Moses blessed all the tribes of Israel, and

ended with saying: "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord!"

After this the great prophet of Israel went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho; and there the Lord shewed him the land of Canaan; on which beloved spot he longed to look before his eyes were closed in death.

Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died; and the Lord buried him. Thus God himself took care of the body of his faithful servant.

"And the children of Israel wept for Moses, in the plains of Moab, thirty-days. And there arose not a prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face; with whom God had talked face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

E. I am very sorry, mamma, that Moses was not allowed to go into the land of Canaan.

M. I am not quite sure, Edward, that I am sorry; for the land of Canaan, after all, was only a beautiful spot on earth; whereas, Moses' eyes were no sooner closed in death, than the glories of heaven were before him. There he would see God really face to face, without any cloud between; there he would see that glory which he had begged God so earnestly to shew him. Had he gone to Canaan, he would soon have found some sorrow, even there; he would soon, no doubt, have been grieved again, by the perverseness of the children of Israel: but now he was gone to heaven, and was safe from sin and sorrow, which could never reach him there. Is there not, therefore, much more cause to *envy* Moses, than to *pity* him? I dare say, his servant

Joshua thought so, when he took his master's place !

And now, Edward, we have brought to an end the history of this great prophet of Israel. We have followed him, step by step, from his cradle of bulrushes to his death upon Mount Pisgah ; and though you are a young child, you are old enough, I am sure, to understand many of the beautiful parts of his character. You can admire the *faith*, which shone so brightly through his whole conduct, from the moment that he turned his back on king Pharaoh's court, and the treasures of Egypt, until he brought the people to the edge of Jordan ; the *patience*, with which he bore his own sufferings and the perverseness of Israel, during his long wanderings in the Arabian desert ; and the piety or love towards God, which made him long so earnestly to see his glory, and delight so much in remaining in his presence.

Such are a few of the beauties which I would wish you to see in the character of Moses ; but, my child, we must not stop here : I must lead you one step further, and shew you how Moses, like most of the holy men of whom you have heard, leads our thoughts to Christ. All along, from the very beginning of the Bible history, our blessed Redeemer is pointed out.

You remember, I am sure, how he was promised to our first parents, immediately after the fall ; then to the faithful Abraham, in whom God so often declared that all the families of the earth should be blessed. I dare say you have not forgotten also, how this promise was made again to Jacob, when

his head rested on his stony pillow at Bethel; and how this aged patriarch, on his death-bed, foretold the coming of Christ. Then you know, how the lamb slain at the Passover was meant to draw our thoughts to the Lamb of God, who was slain for the sins of the world: and how all the sacrifices, the peace-offerings, the sin-offerings, and the blood of sprinkling, with which even the holy things in the sanctuary were cleansed, pointed out the Redeemer of the world. Nor was Moses himself silent on this interesting subject. Among the last words he spoke to the Israelites, we find him telling them, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shalt thou hearken: for the Lord said unto me, I will raise them up a prophet like unto thee, and put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all which I shall command him: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” Now this prophet here promised, was our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though far greater than Moses, was in many respects like him. For as Moses was sent from God to teach the Israelites, so Jesus Christ was sent to teach all the world. As Moses brought in the law, so Christ brought in the Gospel: as Moses worked many and great miracles, to prove that God was with him, so did Christ work others, as many and still more wonderful, to shew us that he came from God.

But though Moses was like Christ, and so should lead our thoughts to him, we must not for a moment suppose that he was at all equal to Christ. For

Moses was but a man ; but Christ, you know, is the everlasting Son of the Most High God. Moses, though a very meek and holy man, was yet not without *sin* : but Christ was holy and undefiled, and came to make an offering for the sins of the whole world,—even for the sins of Moses. Moses was but a servant in the Church of God : but Christ is Lord of all. And as Christ was greater than Moses, so is the Gospel better than the law. The law, which came by Moses, was full of threatenings against disobedience ; but grace and truth, peace and pardon, came by Jesus Christ. Death and punishment were spoken by Moses ; words of eternal life fell from the lips of Jesus.

Only let us take care that we hearken unto him : we must see, in Christ, one far greater than Moses ; we must look up to him as our teacher, sent from God to instruct us in the way of salvation ; and we must be willing to learn from him. More than all that Moses was to the Israelites, must Christ Jesus be to us. In him we have a prophet to teach us,—a priest to atone, or make peace for us with God,—a king to reign over us, and bless us for ever.

THE END.

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